

Lichfield Centres Study

Volume 1: Main Report - FINAL

Prepared for:

Lichfield District Council

September 2025

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Prepared by:

Blathnaid Duffy

Signed:

For and on behalf of Lambert Smith Hampton

Issued: September 2025

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	6
3. ECONOMIC AND MARKET TRENDS	16
4. CENTRES OVERVIEW	26
5. IN-CENTRE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS	37
6. CATCHMENT, COMPETITION & MARKET SHARES	50
7. RETAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT	59
8. HOSPITALITY REVIEW & MARKET ANALYSIS	65
9. RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY MARKET DEMAND ANALYSIS	75
10. OFFICE MARKET ASSESSMENT	80
11. KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS	101

1. INTRODUCTION

1. Lichfield District Council (hereafter referred to as ‘the Council’) commissioned Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) in May 2025 to prepare the ‘Lichfield Centres Report’ (LCR) (the ‘Study’).
2. This Study will provide the robust evidence needed to inform strategic and development management policies for the emerging new Local Plan covering the period up to 2043 particularly in relation to town centre uses across the District’s network of centres.
3. The study will assess how much additional retail and commercial leisure floorspace is needed over the Local Plan period. The findings of the Study will supersede the Council’s current town centre policy evidence base, including the previous Lichfield Centres Report (2017) (‘2017 LCR’).
4. Since the previous study was completed, the UK has experienced major once-in-a-generation economic, health and social events (e.g. COVID-19, energy and cost of living crisis, inflation and a rise in interest rates) that have impacted on how households shop, work and use our town centres. As such, there is a need to review the town centre evidence to ensure that recommendations contained in the new Local Plan are still relevant and reflect the current economic situation and are fully aligned with new socio-economic and demographic forecasts and trends affecting town centres, shopping and leisure patterns.
5. This study has been prepared in the context of current and emerging local, regional and national development plan policy guidance, as well as other key material considerations; principally the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where relevant, the study also draws on advice set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). Both the NPPF and PPG place significant weight on the development of positive plan-led visions and strategies to help ensure the vitality and viability of town centres.
6. The report is supported by **Volume 2**, which comprises the quantitative appendices that inform the economic capacity tables for retail needs and by **Volume 3**, which sets out the outputs of the commissioned in-centre survey for the centres of Lichfield and Burntwood conducted by NEMS Market Research (NEMS) for this study.
7. This Volume draws on the evidence and research in **Volumes 2 and 3**. It provides robust policy recommendations to help the Council prepare positive strategies, plans and policies for the growth, management and adaptation of the Council’s designated town centres over the short, medium and long term to help ensure their future vitality and viability.
8. For ease of reference this Study (**Volume 1**) is divided into the following inter-related sections:
 - **Section 2** reviews the national, regional and local planning policy context.

- **Section 3** highlights some of the key trends that are driving the dynamic changes in the retail and leisure sectors at the national and regional level, and how these trends have shaped (and are likely to shape) the urban and retail landscape over the short to long term.
- **Section 4** provides a summary assessment of the relative vitality and viability of the centres of Lichfield & Burntwood.
- **Section 5** summarises the market share analysis of shopping patterns for different types of comparison and convenience goods purchases across a defined catchment area based on Experian Insights data.
- **Section 6** details the findings of the in-centre surveys undertaken for the centres of Lichfield and Burntwood, the results of which are provided in **Volume 2**.
- **Section 7** details the key assumptions and findings of the strategic retail capacity assessment for new convenience and comparison goods retailing up to 2040 based on LSH's in-house CREAT^e economic model.
- **Section 8** provides a review of the commercial hospitality sector together with a need and 'gap' analysis.
- **Section 9** provides an up-to-date assessment of the availability, requirements and demand for office space within Lichfield and Burntwood and provide a realistic outlook with regard to the future market requirements within the centres and the District as a whole drawing on the findings of the Council's latest Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)
- **Section 10** draws on the previous sections and provides recommendations to help inform the Council's preparation of robust policies and strategies aimed at maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability, and competitive positions of its centres over the lifetime of the new plan.

2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

9. To help inform the preparation of this study, this section provides a summary of the key national, regional and local planning policies pertaining to retail, leisure and other main town centre uses. The review also considers the implications of recent changes to the Use Classes Order and Permitted Development Rights (PDR), particularly in relation to PDRs that allow the conversion of buildings and units in commercial use to residential.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

10. The NPPF was updated in December 2024 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must therefore be considered in plan-making and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
11. The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The NPPF (paragraph 11) sets out the Government's view of what the presumption in favour of sustainable development means in practice. For plan-making: "...plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change" (paragraph 11a).
12. Chapter 3 ('Plan-Making') of the Framework provides guidance to local authorities on preparing local plans. Paragraph 20 states that policies should set out an overall strategy for the location, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for new sustainable development. It requires that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption, except in relation to town centre development (see below). In preparing development plans, "policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence" (paragraph 32). To ensure the local plans and spatial strategies are relevant they should be reviewed at least once every five years and updated as necessary (paragraph 33).
13. Chapter 7 ('Ensuring the vitality of town centres') provides guidance on plan-making and decision-taking for retail and other town centre uses (Town centres or centres are defined by the NPPF (Annex 2) as city centres, town centres, District centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres). Paragraph 90 states that "planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities" and sets out criteria that local authorities should consider when preparing planning policies. These include: (a) defining a network and hierarchy of centres; (b) defining the extent of town centres and Primary

Shopping Areas (PSAs); (c) retaining and enhancing existing markets; and (d) allocating a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the sales and type of development likely to be needed, “looking at least ten years ahead”.

14. Paragraphs 91-95 specifically set out the requirement to apply the sequential and impact tests to determine applications for new retail, leisure and main town centres that are neither in an existing centre, nor in accordance with an up-to-date development plan.
15. Other Chapters in the NPPF are also relevant to the preparation of this study, and to the Council’s plan-making and decision-taking policies for its network and hierarchy of centres. For example, Chapter 8 (‘Promoting healthy and safe communities’) sets out the need to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places; including the need to plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments (paragraph 97a).

PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (PPG)

16. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹ provides specific guidance on plan-making and decision taking for retail, leisure and town centre uses, including guidance on Permitted Development Rights (PDR), Article 4 Directions, and the new Use Classes Order (‘UCO’) that came into effect on 1st September 2020 (discussed later in this section). The Guidance supports the policies and provisions of the NPPF, placing significant weight on the development of positive plan-led visions and strategies for town centres.
17. In terms of planning for town centres, the PPG states that a wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality and viability of town centres. These include residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development. Evening and night-time activities also have the potential to increase economic activity within town centres and provide additional employment opportunities.
18. Paragraph 004 of the PPG (004 Reference ID: 2b-004-20190722) sets out the importance of evidence-based strategies and visions for town centres to help establish their role and function over the plan period, the need for new retail, leisure and town centre uses, and other interventions. However, given the uncertainty in forecasting long-term retail trends and consumer behaviour, the PPG states that forecasts “...may need to focus on a limited period (such as the next five years) but will also need to take the lifetime of the plan into account and be regularly reviewed”. In those cases where development cannot be accommodated in town centres, the PPG requires planning authorities to plan positively to identify the most appropriate alternative strategy for meeting the identified need, having regard to the sequential and impact tests. Paragraph 006 of the PPG (006 Reference ID: 2b-006-20190722) also sets out several Key

¹ [Town centres and retail - GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ensuring-the-vitality-of-town-centres)

Performance Indicators (KPIs) that “may be relevant in assessing the health of town centres, and planning for their future”.

USE CLASS ORDER & PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

19. The Government has issued a series of reforms to the planning system since the completion of the 2019 Study that are relevant to this new study. The reforms principally relate to Permitted Development Rights (PDR) and the Use Classes Order (UCO).
20. The new UCO came into effect from 1st September 2020 and is relevant to the Council’s plan-making and decision-taking on new retail, leisure and town centre uses. The new UCO amended and revoked a number of use classes under the 1987 Order and has replaced them with much broader use classes. In summary, the main reforms introduced by the new UCO include:
 - a new Class E (commercial, business and service uses): which subsumes the former Use Classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services) and A3 (restaurants and cafés). It also incorporates: the former Class B1 (commercial, business and service uses), comprising office, research and development and light industry; Class D1 (non-residential institutions) in part, comprising medical or health services, clinics, crèches, day nurseries and day centres; and Class D2 (assembly and leisure) in part, comprising gyms or areas for indoor recreation.
 - a new Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions): which includes some of the former uses under Class D1 (non-residential institutions), including museums, public libraries, art galleries, schools, and places of worship.
 - a new Class F2 (local community uses): which comprises (former Class A1) shops defined as being “...not more than 280 sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food, and at least 1km from another similar shop”. This Use Class also includes former Class D2 (assembly and leisure), such as meeting places/halls, indoor/outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sport and recreation.
 - an extension to the Sui Generis uses (which fall outside the specified use classes) to include the former Use Classes A4 (pubs and drinking establishments) and A5 (hot food takeaways). It also incorporates some uses previously classified under D2 (assembly and leisure), including cinemas, concert halls, live music venues, bingo and dance halls.
21. Changes of use within a defined Use Class are not considered to be development and as such do not normally require planning permission. As a result, the ability to restrict the use of an existing premises to retail or another specific town centre use has now been largely removed.
22. The Government also issued the new PDR on 1st August 2021 that permits the change of Class E to Class C3 (residential), subject to prior approval applications. This PDR replaces the two existing commercial to residential PDRs under Class O

(office to residential) and Class M (conversion of shops, financial services, betting offices and pay day loan or mixed uses to residential), with a new Class MA. In launching the PDR, the Government stated that the regulations will give “...greater freedom for buildings and land in our town centres to change use without planning permission and create new homes from the regeneration of vacant and redundant buildings”. Although it does not apply to Listed Buildings, it can be applied in a Conservation Area (subject to an impact assessment if it involves converting the ground floor).

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

23. Article 4 Directions are a tool used by local authorities to remove national PDR, if warranted and supported by robust evidence.
24. The Government supports the use of Article 4 Directions in a “highly targeted way” to protect core high street areas whilst not restricting the ability for much needed housing to be delivered.
25. There are no Article 4 Directions in place in Lichfield District Council that seek to remove PDR allowing the conversion of commercial properties to residential use.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

26. Development Plan Documents (DPDs) are defined in the Local Plan Regulations 2012 (as amended). The DPDs guide the development and use of land, allocate sites for development and provide strategic and development management policies to support and manage growth. The adopted DPDs for Lichfield District Council are as follows and are reviewed below:
 - The Local Plan Strategy 2008-2029 (adopted February 2015)
 - Local Plan Allocations 2008- 2029 (adopted July 2019)
 - Local Plan Policies Maps 2008- 2029
27. The DPDs are also supported by the following Neighbourhood Plans:
 - Alrewas neighbourhood plan (adopted October 2018)
 - Armitage with Handsacre neighbourhood plan (adopted October 2018)
 - Burntwood neighbourhood plan (adopted June 2021)
 - Elford neighbourhood plan (adopted January 2019)
 - Fradley neighbourhood plan (adopted February 2019)
 - Hammerwich neighbourhood plan (adopted December 2021)
 - Lichfield City neighbourhood plan (adopted April 2018)
 - Little Aston neighbourhood plan (adopted April 2016)
 - Longdon neighbourhood plan (adopted October 2018)
 - Mavesyn Ridware neighbourhood plan (adopted March 2025)
 - Shenstone neighbourhood plan (adopted September 2025)
 - Stonnall neighbourhood plan (adopted April 2016)
 - Whittington & Fisherwick neighbourhood plan (adopted April 2018)

- Wigginton, Hopwas and Comberford neighbourhood plan (adopted December 2016)

THE LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY 2008-2029

28. The Local Plan Strategy was adopted in February 2015 and outlines the strategic visions, objectives and policies guiding development in Lichfield District up to 2029. Policies relating to retail and other town centre uses are outlined below.
29. **Core Policy 1: The Spatial Strategy** states that new and improved retail development will be focused on the commercial centre of Lichfield City and Burntwood. In accordance with the hierarchy of centres in the table below, Lichfield City will be strengthened and protected as the strategic centre whereas an enlarged town centre at Burntwood will be supported to meet local retail needs. Centres will be enhanced and protected to meet the day to day needs in key rural villages. New neighbourhood centres will be developed to meet the local needs arising from the creation of new communities within Strategic Development Allocations and Broad Development Location.

Table 1: Settlement Hierarchy

Area	Hierarchy	Centres
Lichfield	Strategic Centre	Major growth in town/City Centre uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit of 36,000 sqm gross additional retail within City Centre • Focus for District's leisure activities.
Burntwood	Other Large Centre	Town centre uses to meet local needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit of 14,000 sqm gross additional retail within Town Centre.
Rugeley Tamworth	Neighbouring Town	Not covered within Lichfield District Local Plan.
Fradley, Fazeley, Shenstone, Armitage with Handsacre, Whittington, Alrewas	Key Rural Settlements	Retention of local services and facilities to meet needs of local population and smaller outlying villages.
Clifton Campville, Colton, Drayton Bassett, Edingale, Elford, Hamstall Ridware, Harlaston, Hill	Other Rural Settlements	Look to key rural settlements for local services and facilities.

Ridware, Hopwas, Kings Bromley, Little Aston, Longdon, Stonnall; Upper Longdon; Wigginton		
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30. **Core Policy 8: Our Centres** establishes the hierarchy of centres and highlights that proposals for retail, leisure, office and cultural facilities will be focussed within the commercial centres of Burntwood and Lichfield City. Retail assessments will be required in line with Policy E1 (Retail Assessments) and primary and secondary retail areas will be determined through the Lichfield District Local Plan Allocations document.
31. **Core Policy 14: Our Built & Historic Environment** supports the continued improvements on the physical quality of Burntwood and Lichfield City Centre, focussing on achieving new uses and spaces that can be integrated into an extended town centre.
32. **Policy E1: Retail Assessments** establishes the thresholds for retail assessments as highlighted in the table below.

Table 2: Thresholds for Retail Impact Assessments

Centre	Assessment required	Assessment may be required
Lichfield	Over 1,000 sqm gross	Under 1,000 sqm gross
Burntwood	Over 500 sqm gross	Under 500 sqm gross
Other Centres	Over 100 Sqm gross	Not required

33. **Policy Lichfield 3: Lichfield Economy** promotes Lichfield City Centre as a strategic centre by improving its range of shopping, leisure, business, cultural, education and tourist facilities whilst sustaining and enhancing the significance of its historic environment and heritage assets. 36,000 sqm (gross) development will be supported in Lichfield City Centre up to 2029 which includes 31,000 sqm (gross) comparison goods. A further 5,000 sqm will be allowable outside the town centre boundary for comparison bulky goods.
34. **Policy Lichfield 5: East Lichfield (Streethay)** allocates small scale convenience retail provision to the area identified east of Lichfield, to the north of Streethay.
35. **Policy Lichfield 6: South of Lichfield** allocates small scale convenience retail provision to the area identified south of Lichfield City.
36. **Policy Burntwood 1: Burntwood Environment** states that the town will be promoted as an area of increased and more diverse economic activity including

new retail and employment. The District Council encourages new retail development up to 14,000 sqm gross of which 13,000 sqm will be comparison goods.

37. **Policy Burntwood 2: Burntwood services and facilities** highlights that the range of services and facilities in Burntwood will be improved to remedy deficiencies including the delivery of a new town centre to best meet the needs of residents.
38. **Policy Burntwood 3: Burntwood Economy** focuses on creating a vibrant and diverse town centre. The town will be promoted as an area of increased diverse economic activity including new retail, employment and leisure. Notably, support will be given to an enlarged town centre and the council will encourage new retail development of up to 14,000 sqm gross of which 13,000 sqm gross will be allocated for comparison goods.
39. **Policy: East of Rugeley** allocates neighbourhood facilities including small scale convenience retail provision to the area identified to the east of Rugeley.
40. **Policy Faz3: Fazeley, Mile Oak and Bonehill Economy** emphasises the importance of local employment and retail in the settlement and supports initiatives that link positively in a way which is relevant to the local community.

LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATIONS 2008-2029

41. The Local Plan Allocations was adopted in July 2019. Policies relevant to retail and other town centre uses are identified below.
42. **Policy Lichfield 3: Lichfield Economy** identifies the primary shopping area (PSA) as the retail heart of Lichfield. Proposals for retail uses outside of the PSA or the town centre boundary (for all other main town centre uses) will be required to undertake a sequential test and impact assessment in accordance with national guidance and Local Plan Strategy (2015) Policy E1. Other town centre uses, including cafes, restaurants and offices, should be directed towards secondary frontages. The policy further details that any change of use application from retail to other non-retail uses will be resisted where it will undermine the vitality and viability of the City Centre.
43. **Policy Burntwood 3: Burntwood Economy** expands on the previous policy in the Local Plan strategy (2015) by stating support for new retail development of comparison and convenience floorspace as well as leisure uses on the two key opportunity sites to increase the attractiveness and market share of the centre.
44. **Policy EMP1: Employment Areas & Allocations** states that proposals for retail and leisure uses on existing or allocated employment sites will be permitted where they are related in scale and use to the primary employment focus of the site and would have no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the employment area.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

45. Lichfield District Council has 9 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which are material considerations in the determination of planning applications. There are currently no specific policies relevant to retail and other town centre uses within these plans.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS (NP)

46. Lichfield District Council has 14 approved Neighbourhood Plans which form part of the statutory development plan. Policies relevant to retail and town centre uses within these plans are set out below.
47. **Alrewas NP** Policy ED4 (Tourism) supports developments providing facilities for visitors and tourists, subject to respecting local character and residential amenity and developments being an appropriate size, scale.
48. **Armitage with Handsacre NP** Policy AH7 (Retaining and enhancing existing community facilities) safeguards the following community facilities: village hall, pavilion, public houses and shops. Proposals for their enhancement will be supported and development that would result in the loss of these facilities will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for a particular community facility or that it is no longer commercially viable. Conversely, proposals for new community facilities will be supported if they do not have significant adverse impacts on the natural or built environment, residential amenity, road safety and traffic congestion.
49. **Burntwood NP:**
- Policy B1 (Burntwood Town Centre) supports mixed use development proposals within Burntwood Town Centre, with acceptable uses including new, redeveloped or enhanced retail, employment, community leisure recreational and residential. Additionally, the development of large format retail and leisure uses at Sites A and B are supported.
 - Policy B3 (Chasetown, Swan Island, Ryecroft Shopping Centre and Morley Road Neighbourhood Centres) states that retail uses within the protected retail frontages should be retained unless the loss can be demonstrated to not undermine the vitality and viability of the Neighbourhood Centre.
 - Policy B4 (Local Shops) supports development that retains and/or improves local shops and retail premises outside of the defined Town Centre and neighbourhood centres, subject to the development respecting the local character, residential amenity and highway safety. Support will be given to development that results in the loss of local shops if it can be demonstrated that retail use is no longer viable, further to a 12 month active and open marketing period.
50. **Hammerwich NP** Policy LEc1 (Support for retail and commercial uses) supports proposals which result in the loss of Use Class E uses if it can be demonstrated that the continuation of the current use is not viable. Conversely, proposals to

improve existing, or provide new retail and commercial facilities, will be supported where they accord with other policies in the development plan.

51. **Lichfield City NP:**

- Policy 6 (Non-retail uses in the retail area, Lichfield City Centre) states that non-A-class uses will be supported in the secondary shopping frontages of Lichfield City Centre if it does not result in the loss of existing retail premises. These include uses such as 'pop up' shops and temporary cultural, creative and leisure uses for specific events.
- Policy 7 (Tourism and cultural industry employment) supports development proposals that will create additional local jobs or protect existing jobs in the cultural and tourism industries.

52. **Mavesyn Ridware NP** Policy MR02 (Land East of Hill Ridware) allocates Land at Uttoxeter Road for residential and retail development (Use Class E). The policy states that retail development should a) be located to front onto Uttoxeter Road and b) provide a maximum of 500 sqm of convenience retail floorspace.

53. **Stonnall NP** Policy LSH1 states that proposals that seek to extend the range of facilities offered from the existing retail units identified will be granted planning permission.

EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

54. Lichfield District Council is producing a new Local Plan (Local Plan 2043) which will set a framework for the future sustainable development of Lichfield District up to 2043.

55. As of current, the issues and option consultation (regulation 18 consultation) took place between 30 October and 11 December 2024, with public consultation (regulation 19 consultation) anticipated to commence April 2026.

POLICY SUMMARY

56. This policy review has considered both what is required of the Council as a local planning authority in terms of developing local plan policies, and the current policies that apply to town centres and main town centre uses including retail.

57. In summary, national and local plan policy and guidance seeks to maintain and grow the vitality and viability of centres over time by, amongst other measures, directing new investment and development to town centres first and promoting a diverse mix of sustainable uses that meet the needs of all those who live, work, shop and visit centres for a wide range of activities.

58. The current policies generally reflect these requirements but require review to reflect recent changes to the Use Classes Order and PDRs, as well as to reflect the significant changes seen nationally and within Lichfield District in the retail and leisure offer and consumer shopping patterns. There have also been major economic upheavals affecting consumer spend and business costs. This report therefore provides an update to both the quantitative and qualitative retail and

town centre evidence base to inform the Council's Local Plan review. It then provides advice on what changes or new policies may be required. This follows our review of town centre and retail market trends, retail capacity and the health checks for the main centres.

3. ECONOMIC AND MARKET TRENDS

59. This section summarises some of the key economic, consumer and property market trends that have driven the changes in the retail and leisure sectors over the last decade and how town centres can respond to these dynamic trends to remain competitive and enhance their overall vitality and viability in the future.

UK ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

60. Over the past five years, the UK economy has endured multiple shocks including the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation, elevated energy costs, supply chain disruptions, and trade tensions. Despite these challenges, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) (Economic and Fiscal Outlook – March 2025) projects a gradual economic recovery, with real GDP growth expected to rise from near zero in 2023 to 1% in 2025 and 1.9% in 2026. It is expected to stabilise at an average potential growth rate of 1.75% through 27/28/29, however, uncertainty remains high due to UK labour force, GDP and productivity data as well as global geopolitical disruptions on trade policy.
61. Inflation, measured by the consumer price index CPI, is forecast to increase from 2.5% in 2024 to 3.2% in 2025, peaking at 3.8% in July 2025, driven by energy price caps, food prices, and utility bills. From mid-2026 inflation is expected to return to the Bank of England's 2% target as these pressures ease.
62. Experian Business Strategies (Experian) predict in their latest Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 (March 2025) ('**RPBN 22**') a slightly stronger GDP outlook for 2025, bolstered by early-stage government spending and a modest rebound in retail sales, particularly in discretionary consumer categories, as real incomes begin to recover.

RETAIL SPENDING

63. The latest Experian forecasts from RPBN 22 for retail spending per capita show:
- **Convenience goods:** The impact of COVID-19 resulted in a significant +6.8% surge in spend per head in 2020 but a contraction of -1.3% in 2021. This followed negative growth of -2.3% between 1998 and 2023. The overall level of negative growth in convenience goods spending has had a significant impact on the grocery sector and on retailer business models. Experian reported a fall in convenience spend in 2023 (-3.5%); 2024 (-1.8%); and 2025 (-0.8%). With no growth projected over the medium term to 2030 and beyond over the longer term to 2040.
 - **Comparison goods:** Experian figures show negative growth up to 2024 (-3.2% in 2023; -1% in 2024). The predicted (per capita) growth for 2025 is a nominal 0.1%, 1.3% in 2026 which will settle at around +2.5% to 2031 and to +2.6% up to 2040. The longer-term growth

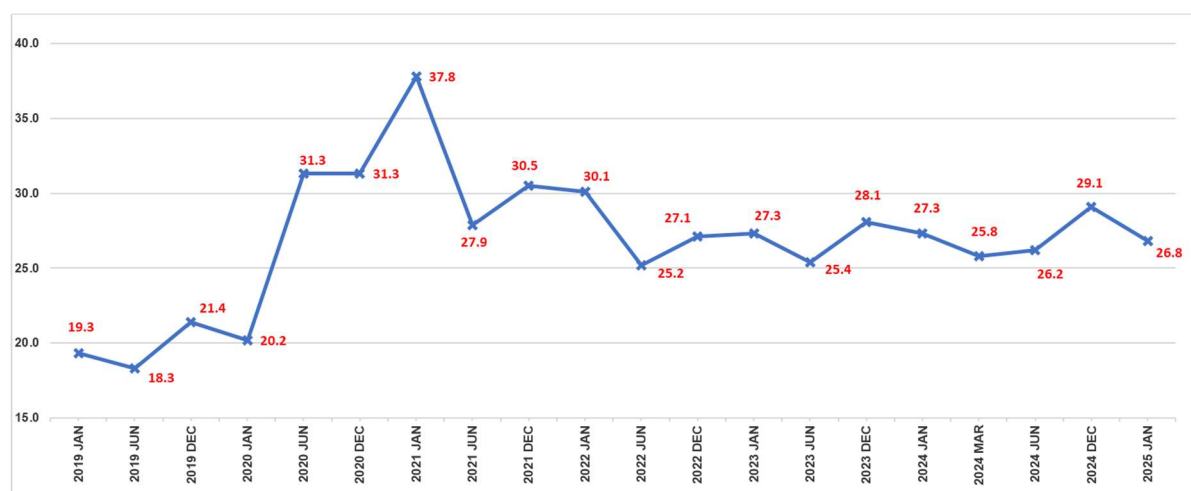
forecast is higher than the historic long-term trend (1998-2023) of +1.5% per annum.

64. These expenditure growth trends, and forecasts, have informed the updated assessments of retail capacity. Clearly any further dampening of growth rates over the short to medium term due to external shocks such as rising inflation and the cost-of-living crisis will have implications for the viability of existing retail businesses and the demand for new space.

ONLINE SHOPPING

65. The growth in non-store retail sales has undoubtedly had the most significant impact on consumer spend and behaviour over the last decade, and on our High Streets and traditional shops. Non-store retailing is commonly referred to as Special Forms of Trading (SFT).
66. This comprises all non-store retail sales made via the internet, mail order, stalls and markets, door-to-door and telephone sales. On-line sales by supermarkets, department stores and catalogue companies are also included in the data collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
67. ONS figures show that as a percentage of total sales, online retail sales accounted for up to 26.8% of sales in January 2025. The graph also shows the steep increase from 20.2% in January 2020 to 37.8% in January 2021. Overall, the trend suggests that since 2020 online accounts for between a quarter to a third of the amount spent on retail goods. This compares to less than 5% in 2008.

Figure 1: Internet Sales as a Percentage of Total Sales (%) (to September 2024)

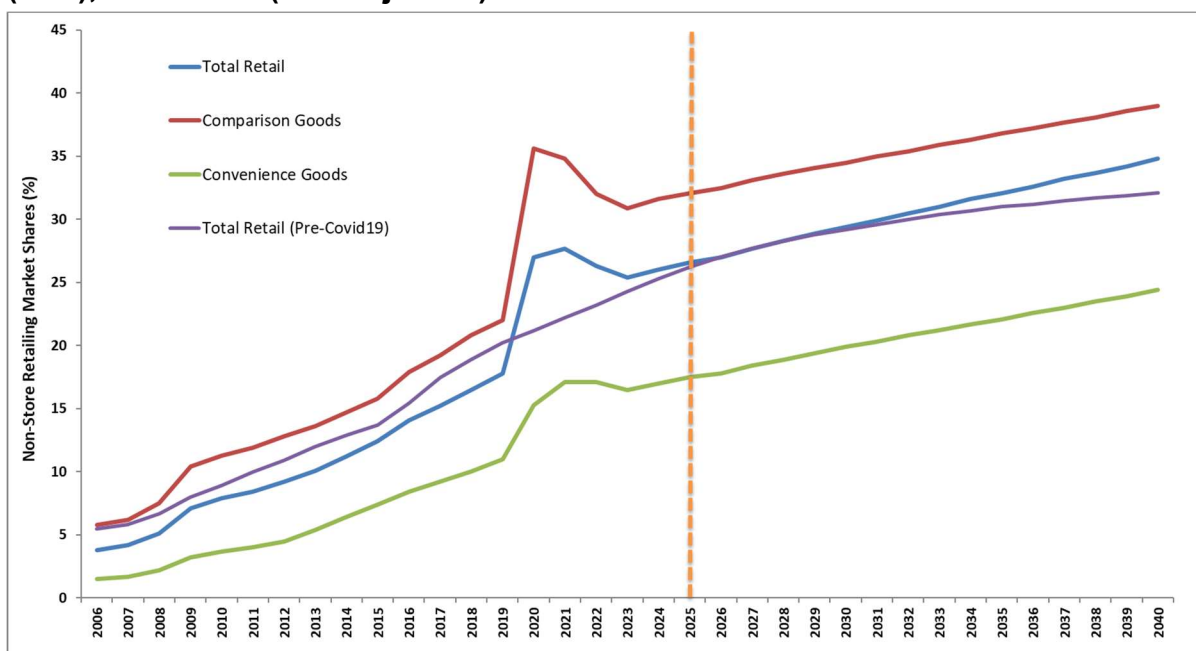


Source: ONS: Retail sales, Great Britain: November 2024

68. As the figure below from Experian shows, SFT's overall market share (as a proportion of total UK retail sales) increased from 3.8% in 2006 to 27% in 2020. In other words, online accounted for almost one in every three pounds spent on retail

goods in 2020. Of this total non-store retail sales, Experian estimate that comparison and convenience goods retailing achieved market shares of 35.6% and 15.3% respectively in 2020. They further estimate that comparison and convenience goods retailing will attain market shares of 32.1% and 17.5% respectively in 2025.

Figure 2: Estimated and Projected Market Shares of Non-Store Retail Sales (SFT), 2006-2040 (Not Adjusted)



Source: Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 (March 2025)

69. The latest Experian forecasts indicate that total SFT market shares will increase to 34.8% by 2040. Comparison and convenience goods non-store retail sales are forecast to reach 39% and 24.4% respectively by 2040.
70. According to Experian, the rising share of internet sales in total retail transactions is the key trend. The ease of online purchasing has also continued to improve rapidly, with technological advances, particularly around smartphones and connectivity. Faster delivery times, including same day delivery, and easier returns processes have also encouraged the trend. The expansion of 5G and fibre networks should ensure the momentum is maintained over the medium term. The proliferation of the buy now pay later business model and price tracker sites is also supporting growth.
71. With the growth predicted in online sales and market shares, it is clear that high streets, town centres and physical retailers will need to work even harder to retain their existing customer base and attract new customers over the short, medium and long term.
72. In terms of forecasting the potential capacity for new physical retail floorspace, Experian estimate that approximately 25% of all SFT sales for comparison goods and 70% for convenience goods are still sourced through traditional ('bricks-and-mortar') retail space, rather than through 'virtual' stores and/or 'dot com'

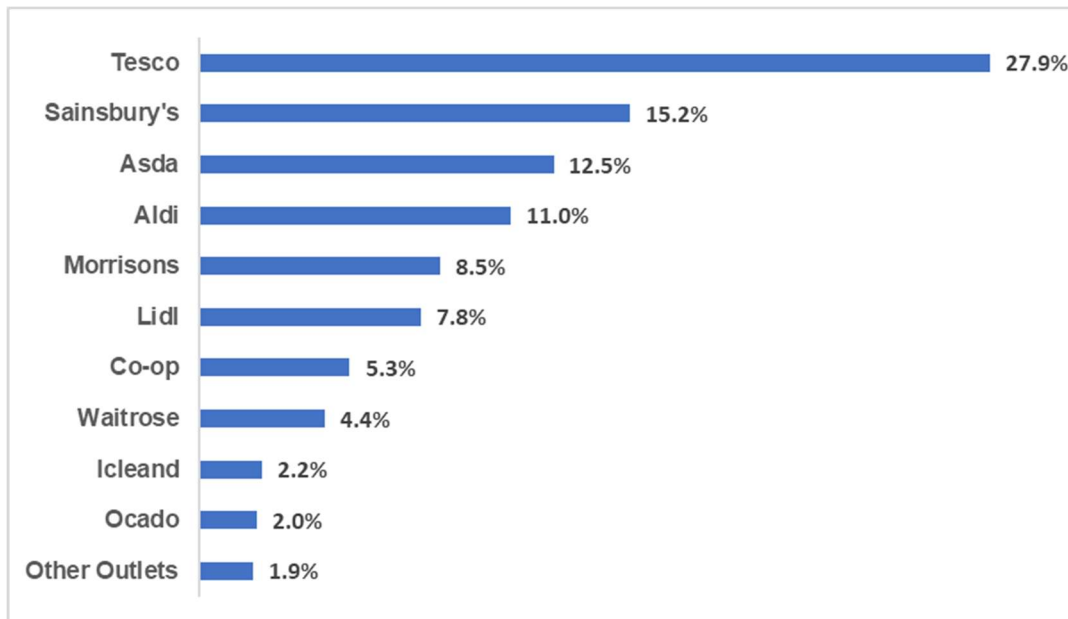
distribution warehouses. On this basis, Experian adjust their SFT market shares downwards for total retail to 16.9% in 2025, 18.9% by 2030 and 22.9% by 2040. In line with standard approaches these adjusted / recalibrated market share figures are preferred for retail capacity assessments and used in this assessment.

73. In summary, both retailers and high streets will need to compete for shoppers and expenditure through a variety of means including creating experiences that will attract the interest and attention of potential consumers across all age and socio-economic groupings.

RETAILER BUSINESS MODELS AND REQUIREMENTS

74. The recent challenging economic conditions and growth in online sales have had a significant and permanent impact on consumer shopping and spending behaviour. Retailers in the recent past have faced challenges across the supply chain, inflationary pricing, economic uncertainty and geo-political factors.
75. Retail is undergoing a major transformation as the new normal drives hybrid, technology enabled and sustainability focused consumer expectations. Key trends shaping the future include:
- **Hybrid ‘phygital’ shopping** through seamless integration across online, in-store, mobile, social and virtual platforms is now essential.
 - **AI driven personalisation** as increasingly retailers are using AI for smarter chat bots, personalised recommendations and data-driven promotions to enhance customer engagement.
 - **Social commerce** where social media is not just for marketing. Brands now sell directly through platforms leveraging influencer partnerships and sentiment analysis to drive sales conversions.
 - **Monetising retail spaces** where physical stores and websites are doubling as advertising channels and with services such as ‘Click-and-collect’ and ‘Buy Online, Pick Up In Store’ (BOPIS) improving consumer convenience.
 - **Sustainability and the circular economy** as eco-conscious consumers are embracing reuse, repair and recycling prompting retailers to prioritise green packaging, ethical sourcing and transparency.
76. The grocery market illustrates the shift vividly. While traditional giants like Tesco and Sainsbury's focus on online and convenience formats, deep discounters ALDI and Lidl have surged. ALDI now ranks among the top four UK grocers overtaking Morrisons. Large store developments have all but halted highlighting a seismic industry pivot towards agility, access and sustainability.

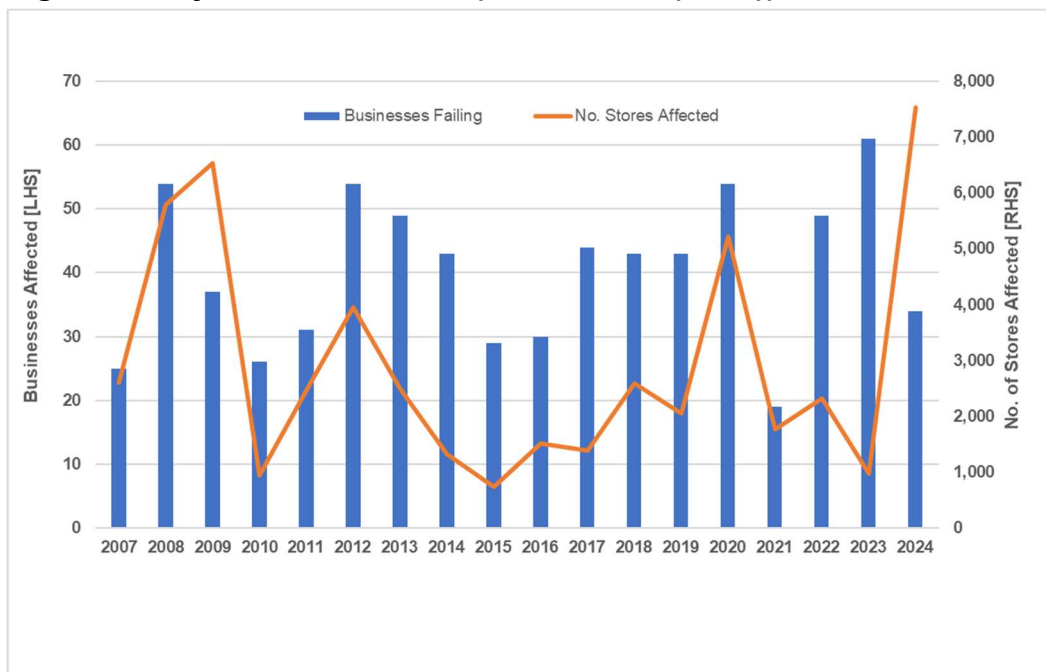
Figure 3: UK Grocery Market Share



Source: Kantar (April 2025)

77. The non-food retail sector is under intense pressure as well due to the rise of online shopping, post COVID financial constraints and soaring operational costs continued to reshape the high streets. Store closure numbers are peaking with 5,200 store closures in 2020 and 7,537 in 2024 with almost 55,900 job losses with major chains like The Body Shop and WHSmith among the casualties.

Figure 4: Major Retail Failures (2007 – 2024 (June))



Source: Centre for Retail Research (April 2025)

78. Retailers are grappling with reduced business rates relief down from 75% to 40% and an uneven playing field, where High Street trading is costlier than online or out

of town alternatives. Traditional retail models are struggling to adapt fast enough to shifting consumer behaviours and digital demand.

79. While larger retailers face mounting difficulties, technology adoption offers a lifeline especially for agile small and medium enterprises who are leveraging digital tools to expand region track consumer trends. Still, challenges like digital skills gaps and technology affordability limit this potential, reinforcing the urgent need for transformation across the sector.

RISING OCCUPANCY COSTS

80. High street retailers are under growing strain as occupancy costs such as rents, rates, utilities and wages rise faster than inflation and outpace sales growth. This squeezes margins and accelerates store closures. The competitive imbalance between bricks and mortar stores and online or Out of Centre retailers makes survival even tougher. To stay viable, retailers must maximise efficiency and productivity from existing space.
81. The latest Retail Planner Briefing Note (RPBN 22) (March 2025) provides forecasts of annual floorspace productivity growth rates based on two different scenarios: (i) the 'constant floorspace scenario', based on limited potential for new retail development, resulting in greater efficiency of existing floorspace; and (ii) the 'changing floorspace scenario', which takes account of the impact of new retail development on average retailer sales performance. The table below sets out the differences between the two scenarios.

Table 3: Floorspace Productivity Growth Rates (year-on-year growth %)

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027-2031	2032-2040
CONSTANT FLOORSPACE						
Convenience Goods	-2.4%	-2.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Comparison Goods	-0.5%	-0.1%	0.5%	1.7%	2.5%	2.5%
CHANGING FLOORSPACE						
Convenience Goods	-2.4%	-2.3%	-0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.1%
Comparison Goods	-0.5%	-0.2%	0.4%	1.6%	2.3%	2.3%

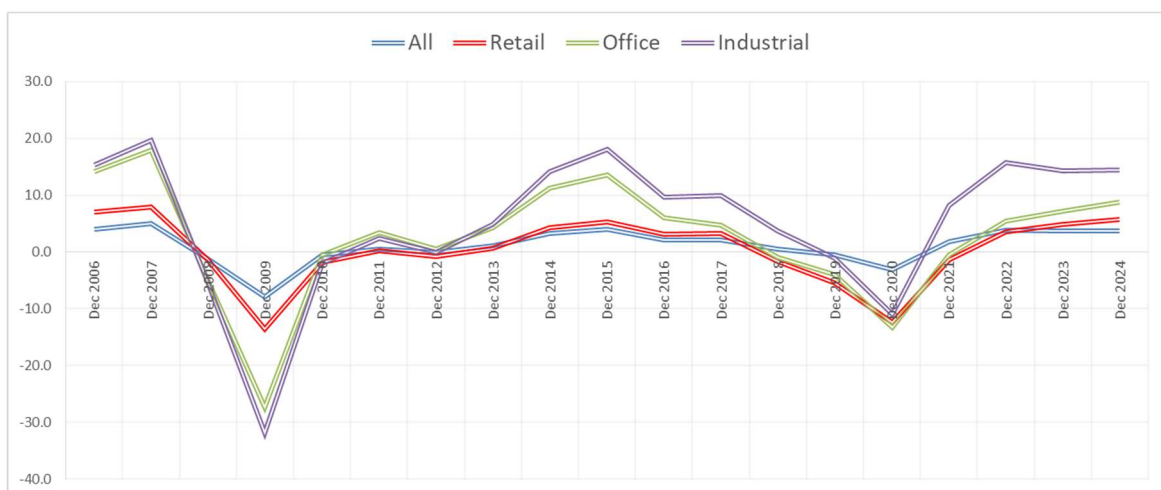
Source: Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 (March 2025); Figures 3a/3b and 4a/4b

82. As Experian explain, sales density growth rates have been volatile in recent years given sharp swings in retail spending due to temporary closures in businesses during the pandemic, and subsequently the impact of high inflation. There is anticipated growth in sales density in 2025 as retail sales volumes rebound, driven by the comparison component, aided by mildly improving consumer affordability. However over the medium and longer term, budgetary challenges from rising costs and tight margins will be a key factor underpinning floor space efficiencies over the coming years. These results reflect national trends and there will be marked differences between local areas.
83. On this basis, budgetary pressures mean that retailers will have to increase efficiencies from current floorspace including through redevelopment/repurposing of existing floorspace; adoption of modern technology and innovations; more

effective marketing strategies; and adopting an ‘omni-channel’ strategy (refers to the integration of different methods of shopping available to consumers e.g. via the internet, in a physical shop, or by phone) that uses internet sales to increase the sales performance of physical shops. This is against a backdrop of weak demand for retail property, high vacancy levels and a significant fall in new retail-led development in centres across the UK.

84. For these reasons we prefer to test higher ‘**constant floorspace productivity**’ growth rates for retail planning assessments, as they better reflect national trends and the need for existing retailers to increase their sales potential and profit margins to remain viable.
85. Retail demand across UK centres has plummeted to historic lows dragging down rents, property values and investor confidence. Since the 2007/8 financial crisis further exacerbated more recently by the pandemic and cost of living crisis, the retail sector has consistently underperformed compared to other property sectors as shown below.

Figure 5: Property: Average Rental Growth (2006-2024) (%)



Source: MSCI UK Quarterly Property Index (April 2025)

86. Retailers are leveraging this downturn to secure more favourable lease terms, including turnover based rents, capped service charges, shorter leases, pandemic clauses and generous incentives. Many UK retail centres suffer from an oversupply of outdated or the ‘wrong type’ of spaces unable to meet modern retailer demands for larger flexible units.
87. LSH’s research together with REVO titled ‘**Shaping Tomorrow’s Places**’ (June 2025) provides a barometer of the main issues and challenges facing our centres, and the opportunities and potential interventions available (&/or needed) to support their future recovery, reinvention and renaissance
88. This research indicated that business rates have consistently been identified as one of the main challenges impacting on the viability of our centres alongside an oversupply of retail space and the growth of online retail spend.
89. This over-supply of retail floorspace and limited market demand is placing further pressures on the viability of existing stores and shopping centres. In turn, this

makes it difficult for landlords, investors and retailers to justify additional capital expenditure.

OUT-OF-CENTRE RETAILING

90. Out of Centre retail development has slowed, mirroring the challenges facing town centres. Major grocery chains have shifted focus from large format stores to online and convenience formats. The exception is the discounters like ALDI and Lidl who remain active in seeking new edge and out-of-centre sites.
91. Despite the slowdown, Out of Centre locations still offer key advantages namely lower occupancy costs, larger modern units, ample free parking and last mile delivery potential. These trends continue to attract retailers adapting to evolving consumer behaviours. For example, Marks and Spencer has pivoted from high streets to open more food-only stores in out-of-centre locations.
92. According to the investment property forum (May 2025), modest rental growth is expected in 2025; 1.5% for shopping centres, 2.3% for retail warehouses and 2.5% for standard retail indicating cautious optimism in a still-rebalancing market.

VACANCY RATES

93. At the end of 2024, the GB national average 'All Vacancy Rate' (retail and leisure combined) stood at 13.8% (a decrease from 14% in 2023). The current rate is still higher than the pre-pandemic (Q4 2019) level of 12.1%, so the sector has yet to fully recover.
94. Over the past five years, retail parks and shopping centres have shown an overall decline in vacancy rates, while high streets have experienced an increase. From a vacancy high of 19.4% in the second quarter of 2021, shopping centres dropped to 17.2% by the final quarter of 2024.
95. The LSH/Revo survey has consistently identified there is too much retail floorspace in the UK. As a result, centres and locations are competing to attract limited occupier interest. There is also competition to secure public and private sector investment to help deliver critical redevelopment and regeneration projects.

USE CLASSES ORDER & PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

96. In 2020, the Government's reforms to the Use Class Order resulted in the replacement of Use Class A1 to A5, D1 and D2 with E Class (Commercial), F1 (Learning and Non-Residential) and F2 (Local Community Uses) and the restructuring of sui generis uses (public houses, hot food takeaways, cinemas, music venues, bingo etc.). The main outcome being that it allows for commercial uses within Class E to change without any planning control.
97. As town centre uses, they are still subject to the sequential test, while retail and leisure uses within Class E and Sui Generis are subject to the impact test. As such there is still a need to for development plans to identify a town centre

boundary and a primary shopping area, or a primary 'commercial' area to be the foci for E and F Classes.

98. Of more particular note, the reforms have implications for primary and secondary shopping frontages, as the control of shopping and service uses is legally less enforceable in commercial areas, as a change of use between Class E does not constitute development and will therefore not require planning permission. It should be noted that the effectiveness of frontage policies was declining before the pandemic and previous changes to the UCO. However, there may still be a role to control some sui generis uses in key town centre locations, such as provision of fast-food takeaways, betting shops, payday loan shops or other uses that are justified to be subject to planning control.
99. Beyond 2025, UK centres are set to evolve from retail dominated hubs into vibrant, mixed-use destinations. As traditional retail contracts, there is a growing shift towards place making by introducing non-retail uses such as health, education, leisure and flexible office space helps to reinvigorate and counter decentralisation trends.
100. A key growth area is City Centre living, with increased residential development especially on upper floors or housing above ground floor commercial uses. Repurposing vacant retail space for homes, offices and community functions presents a major opportunity for urban regeneration and for the long term vitality and viability of town centres.
101. The introduction of Class AA and AB in August 2020 (under the Permitted Development Changes (Amendment No. 2) (2020)), allowing new residential on detached or terrace buildings in commercial or mixed-use areas could potentially lead to the loss of commercial floorspace to residential.
102. Furthermore, the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development etc.) (England) (Amendment) Order 2021 (Order) that came into force in August 2021 created a new class of permitted development right (Class MA) into the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (GPDO) authorising changes of use from Use Class E commercial uses to Use Class (C3) residential.
103. For any application submitted on or after 5 March 2024, there is now no limit to the floorspace that can be converted under Class MA and there is no requirement for the building to be vacant for three months.
104. These changes replace existing retail, light industrial and office to residential rights with rights applying to all of the relatively recent Use Class E in which those uses now sit. Exercise of the right is subject to prior approval by the local planning authority and therefore would be subject to some planning control. Details must be submitted relating to flooding, transport, contamination, noise amenity, natural light, fire safety and agent of change issues.

SUMMARY

105. Town centres and our traditional high streets have always been dynamic, adapting and evolving to meet the emerging needs of their customer base but the significant and fast-moving structural changes seen during the last 10-15 years have made it difficult for centres to adapt quickly enough, resulting in increased vacancies and under-utilised retail space
106. The critical challenge over the short, medium and long term will be how to retain existing businesses, fill/replace the voids and attract new investment. The danger is that an increase in long-term vacancies in centres will lead to a 'spiral of decline', which will further engender feelings of neglect and lack of investment confidence in town centres, and "push" more people to shop online.
107. The repurposing of existing retail space and increased diversity of uses will therefore be key to ensuring that town centres at all levels of the retail hierarchy are able to continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of their catchment.
108. As town centres evolve, residential provision in centres is already being encouraged, including by previous national planning changes (such as office to residential conversions through prior approval, and permitted development for two flats above a shop).
109. It will also be important to maximise intergenerational residential provision in the most sustainable locations, particularly in centres, as part of a balanced mix of uses. The LSH/REVO research mentioned previously also indicated that providing mixed tenure homes in and on the edge of centres is recognised as key to delivering more viable and resilient town centres. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to planning policies and allocations enabling the growth of other uses, such as education, leisure and recreation, within centres, which, along with residential, are particularly positive in terms of enhancing the vitality of centres.

4. CENTRES OVERVIEW

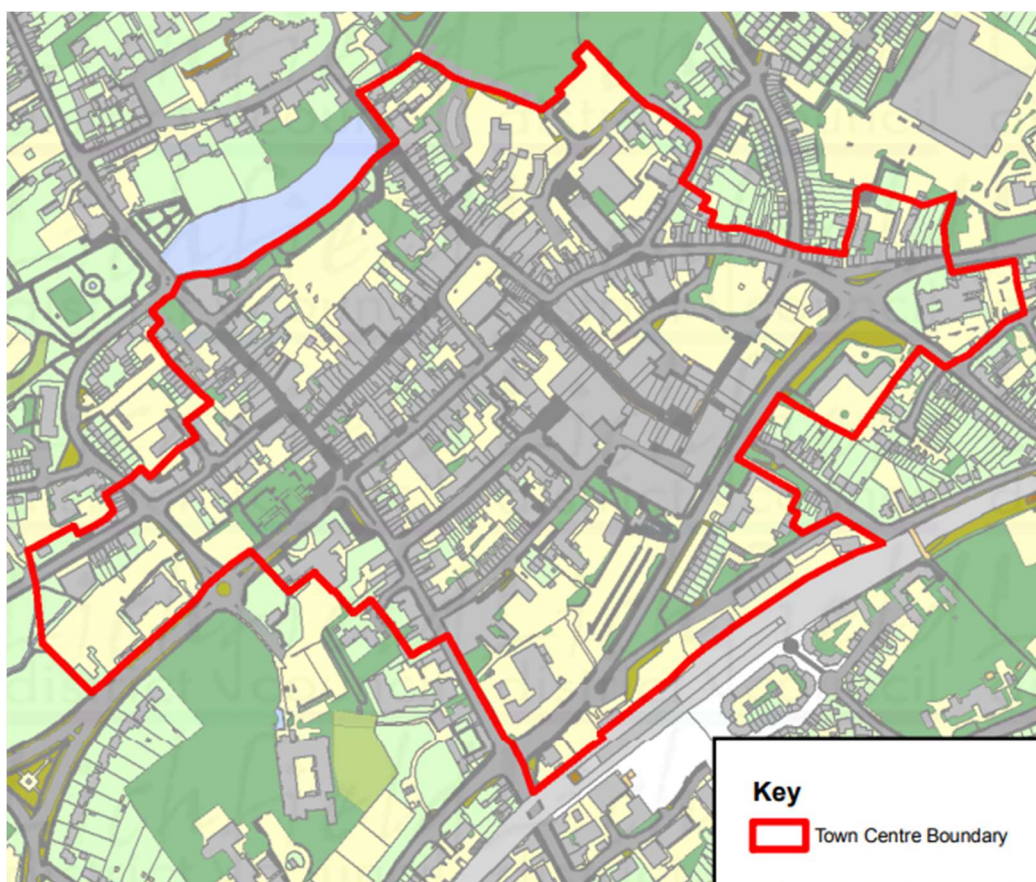
110. To assess the vitality and viability of Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre, an analysis of their diversity of uses (including vacancies), along with a review of the national multiples present within each centre, is set out below.

LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE

CONTEXT

111. Lichfield is a historical cathedral city and is designated as a 'Strategic Centre' in the Local Plan Strategy (Core Policy 8 Our Centres, Hierarchy of Centres Table 9.1). The centre serves as the administrative and principal shopping, leisure and service centre for District's urban and rural communities. The city is located north east of the Birmingham conurbation, which as the market share analysis and overview of retail offer confirms, limits the city centre's role as a shopping destination.
112. The defined city centre boundary is set out in the Lichfield Local Plan Strategy and is replicated in the figure below:

Figure 6: Lichfield City Centre Boundary & Shopping Areas



Source: Lichfield Local Plan Strategy (adopted 2015)

113. The commercial heart of the city centre comprises a number of key shopping streets that broadly correlate to the defined Primary Retail Area (Local Plan Map)

including, Market Street, Market Square, Bore Street, Bakers Lane, and Three Spires Shopping Centre.

114. Retail development has emerged east of the city centre boundary and includes a Tesco Superstore and a nearby Aldi store. Further east and just within the settlement boundary are further (out of centre) retail and leisure facilities including Imperial Retail Park, which is anchored by B&M, Lidl, and Iceland Food Warehouse. Additional retail development is located south and east of the park and in the form of industrial / trade parks.
115. The city centre is served by Lichfield City Train Station, southeast of the centre, with direct trains to Birmingham New Street. Lichfield Trent Valley, located outside the City Centre boundary, 1.3 miles northeast of Lichfield City Train station, offers direct trains to London Euston. It has good road connections through the M6, A51 and A5127.

DIVERSITY OF USES

116. Goad data from October 2024 has been used to assess Lichfield City Centre's mix of uses. The figure below shows the area covered by Goad. The Experian Goad map includes parts of the city that do not fall within the defined city centre area. Notably, this includes the Tesco and Aldi stores. Conversely, the Goad survey area excludes commercial units along Queen Street, which fall within the defined city centre boundary.

Figure 7: Experian Goad Map, Lichfield



Source Experian Goad

117. The table below outlines the city centre's diversity of uses based on outlets and floorspace and provides a comparison to Goad's UK averages.

Table 4: Lichfield City Centre Outlets and Floorspace

	No. of Outlets	% of Total Outlets		Gross Floorspace (sqm)	% of Total Floorspace	
		Lichfield	UK Average		Lichfield	UK Average
Comparison Retail	106	30.8%	26.4%	18,690	26.5%	29.4%
Convenience Retail	29	8.4%	9.3%	12,410	9.3%	15.6%
Retail Services	57	16.6%	15.9%	5,260	15.9%	7.3%
Leisure Services	97	28.2%	25.8%	17,370	25.9%	26.7%
Financial & Business Services	32	9.3%	8.3%	5,260	8.3%	6.3%
Vacant	23	6.7%	14.1%	5,740	14.1%	14.2%
Total	344	100.0%	100.0%	64,730	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Experian GOAD (2024)

118. The city centre has a strong comparison retail offer, comprising of 106 units, representing 30.8% of total outlets, above the UK average of 26.4%. The comparison retail offer meets a range of the catchment's comparison needs, including clothing stores, charity stores, stationery stores, and more. The clothing / fashion offer ranges from value-focused stores such as Claire's and Peacocks to more premium stores such as White Stuff and Fat Face. There are stationery supply stores such as Ryman and TGJones (formerly WHSmith), and stores for younger shoppers, including The Entertainer and CeX for electronics needs.
119. Retail services account for 16.6% of the total outlets in Lichfield, which is consistent with the UK average of 15.9%. However, floorspace share is 8.3 percentage points above the UK average, effectively double the average (15.9% vs 7.3%). This category includes the typical retail services operators, such as Specsavers and the Post Office. There is also a strong presence of independent health and beauty outlets, with 39 tenants in total.
120. There are 29 convenience retail units within the centre, which is slightly below the UK average both in terms of units and, more notably, in overall floorspace, with a shortfall of 6.3 percentage points (9.3% vs 15.6%). Provision is largely supported by the edge of centre foodstores - Aldi and Tesco Superstore (immediately north-east of the city centre boundary). These two foodstores serve as the primary convenience retail anchors for the city.
121. Convenience offer within the defined city centre boundary is represented by smaller-format foodstores such as Tesco Express and Iceland, which provide a top-up shopping offer (or in the case of Iceland it is likely to support some main food shopping). Other convenience offer in the city centre includes a Holland and Barrett health food store and a selection of independent local retailers, grocers, bakeries, butchers and 4 vape/e-cigarette stores.
122. There is reasonably representation of financial, legal and property services, with provision above the UK average in terms of outlets and floorspace. The centre covers a good range of high street banks and building societies consisting of 6 operators: Halifax, HSBC, Lloyds Bank, NatWest, Nationwide and Yorkshire Building Society.
123. There are 97 leisure service outlets within the city centre, which are overwhelmingly food and beverage outlets (85), with the remainder comprising bingo/ high street casino outlets, three sports/gym outlets, and a youth centre.

124. Experian Goad identify two hotels in the city centre including the Best Western The George Hotel, a 3-star hotel with 45 rooms, and St John's House, a 4-star hotel with 12 Rooms. There are other hotels identified within the wider centre and these are discussed in more detail in Section 8.
125. There is one theatre, Lichfield Garrick Theatre, that has a main auditorium with 562 seats and a studio theatre with 157 seats.
126. There are a total of 85 food and beverage outlets in Lichfield, accounting for 24.7%, above the national average of 21.9%. The UK average indicates that fast food and takeaway typically make up the largest proportion of food and beverage units. In Lichfield, the overall percentage of such outlets is below the UK average, behind by 1.8 percentage points. There are five national multiples including KFC, Subway and McDonald's. The remaining nine are independent outlets such as Angel House (Chinese Take-away), Paprika (Indian Take-away) and Pizzaco (Pizza Take-away).
127. A review of the food & beverage offer that falls within the hospitality sector (i.e. cafes, restaurants, bars/pubs) are detailed in Section 8.

VACANCIES

128. There is a total of 23 vacant outlets in Lichfield, which represents 6.7% of the overall outlets, lower than the UK average of 14.1%. 14.1% of the floorspace in Lichfield is vacant which is on par to the UK average of 14.2%.
129. Vacant units are scattered around the centre, with no real concentrations present. There is a large vacancy at Three Spires Shopping Centre towards the back, which is the former Debenhams store, along with 4 smaller units within the shopping centre.

Figure 8: Vacancy



Source: Experian GOAD

NATIONAL MULTIPLES

130. National multiples allow a centre to draw shoppers from beyond its immediate catchment as people search for their nearest store and are willing to travel further for brands such as John Lewis and M&S. Lichfield has a range of national multiples across the following Goad sectors:
- Comparison retail: White Stuff, Peacocks, Mountain Warehouse, Claire's, The Works, Waterstones, and Boots. Charity shops such as Barnardo's, British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research and Oxfam. Mobile operator retailers such as EE, O2 and Vodafone
 - Convenience retail: Tesco Express, Iceland, Holland and Barrett, Aldi and Tesco Superstore
 - Retail services: Boots Opticians, Post Office, Co-operative Travel, Vision Express and Specsavers
 - Leisure services: Ask, Caffè Nero, Coffee #1, Papa John's, Domino's Pizza, McDonald's and William Hill
 - Financial and business services: Connells, NatWest, HSBC and Nationwide

Stakeholder Feedback

131. Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to provide feedback on the centres from those who have strong connection to the area and a vested interest in it. Stakeholder feedback collected on Lichfield can be summarised as follows:

Key Strengths of Lichfield

- Successful tourist centre
- Strong historic character
- Good leisure offer (such as cinema, leisure centre, cathedral and National Memorial Arboretum)
- Centre is compact and highly walkable, encouraging dwell times
- Good food and beverage offer
- Well connected by train to Birmingham and London

Key challenges/ local issues for Lichfield

- Poor transport connections to other centres and surrounding villages
- Need for diversification beyond retail
- Changing consumer habits – online shopping
- Pockets of vacancies
- Business rates and rents for small operators
- Availability and cost of parking
- Challenges with loading/unloading restrictions, traffic flow

Key opportunities for Lichfield

- Potential for evening offer to grow with food and beverage, cultural venues and events
- Building on the city's heritage - scope to be a regional cultural destination
- Increase sustainability, such as greener public spaces, active travel infrastructure and low-carbon buildings
- Bring new life through residential, leisure, workspace, and hotel development
- Encouraging high-level residential development
- Pop-up shops
- More events that encourage daily visits

What is lacking in Lichfield for residents, business and visitors

- Evening economy activity, especially for younger generation and families
- More inclusive and accessible centres for community use (such as youth services, drop-in centres and indoor meeting spaces)
- Strong tourist information points and support
- Convenient coach drop-off/pick-up
- Modern office space
- Mentoring, networking and support with marketing and grant funding for local businesses
- Appropriately sized, affordable premises with flexible lease terms for small start-up businesses

Key competing centre/locations

- McArthur Glen Centre in Cannock with discounted high-end stores
- Tamworth Ventura Retail Park has a large number of national retailers and free parking
- Birmingham is a regional competitor, especially for full-day and nighttime experiences
- Burton upon Trent has a good comparison and convenience goods
- Sutton Coldfield is no longer a competing centre

How the role of Lichfield is likely to change over the next 5 to 10 years

- If mixed-use regeneration at Birmingham Road and Three Spires is successful, it will strengthen the evening economy and enhance cultural and leisure attractions
- Evolve to a diverse mixed-use environment (residential, leisure, cultural, office and community)

SUMMARY

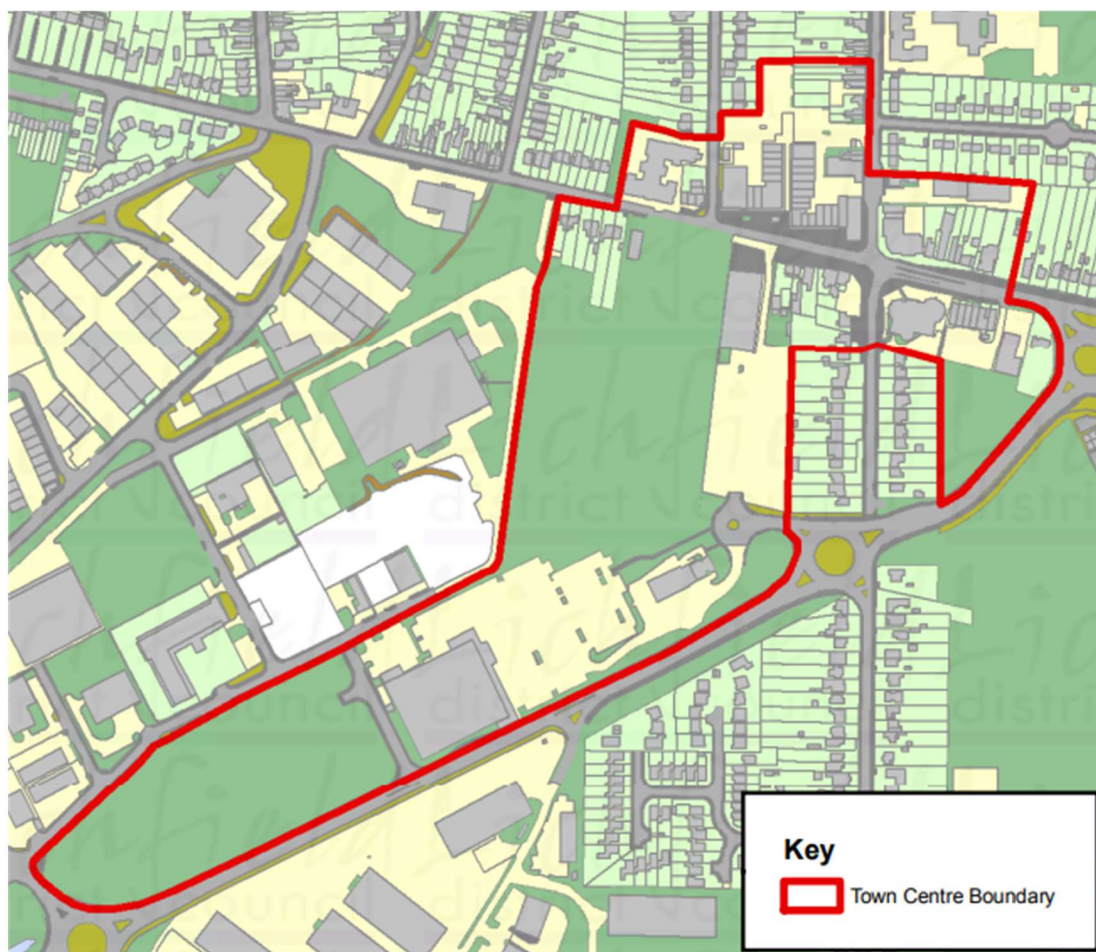
132. We conclude that Lichfield City Centre is currently performing well, and is a vital centre, providing for its immediate resident catchment whilst drawing visitors from beyond.
133. The city centre has a low vacancy rate, a good mix of day-to-day uses and a healthy presence of comparison retail, retail services and financial services. Convenience retail provision in the defined city centre is limited to top-up shopping facilities with main food shopping served by edge of centre foodstores. This will limit the potential for linked shopping trips, particularly if parking provision does not support the opportunity for longer stay (either in the city centre or at the foodstore car parks). The city centre is well served in terms of commercial leisure options including sports/gym facilities, a theatre, bars and pubs, and a particularly strong offer of restaurants and cafes (which is discussed in more detail in Section 8). The tenant mix includes many national operators alongside a good selection of independent retailers, which creates a balanced and vibrant retail centre.
134. However, the city centre will be vulnerable to competition from higher order centres, particularly where national multiples seek to rationalise store portfolios and focus on larger and stronger centres. This presents a key threat for Lichfield City Centre given the proximity to Birmingham. It will be important that retail policies continue to promote the town centres first approach to new retail and leisure development and promote opportunities to strengthen the city centre's commercial offer and the diversification of commercial uses to support new operators. The latter is already occurring in the city centre through the repurposing of the Debenhams store at Three Spires for a new cinema (Everyman). This investment is expected to help drive new footfall to the centre, particularly in the evening time, which in turn will help boost the centre's evening time economy.

BURNTWOOD TOWN CENTRE

CONTEXT

135. Burntwood is designated as a 'Town Centre' in the adopted Local Plan and is located towards the west edge of Lichfield District boundary, and west of Lichfield City Centre (5.7 miles). The town centre stretches along Cannock Road, from west of Water Street to the east of Bridge Cross Road, as well as south on Milestone Way.
136. The town centre boundary is defined in Local Plan Strategy and is replicated in the figure below:

Figure 9: Burntwood Town Centre Boundary



Source: Lichfield Local Plan Strategy (adopted 2015)

137. The original town centre comprised Burntwood Shopping Centre, a small and compact, uncovered and managed shopping precinct located off Cannock Road. The town centre expanded over the years to the south to include the Morrisons and Aldi foodstores and associated car parking. While the centre has a good range of commercial facilities the Local Plan Strategy notes that the centre lacks social and community uses.
138. While the town centre is not served by a railway station, it is well-connected by road via the A5195 and A5190, with access to the M6 and close to A5 and A38, and regular bus services linking to surrounding towns.

DIVERSITY OF USES

139. Burntwood's commercial offer is primarily concentrated around Cannock Road, which features a small managed shopping centre, Burntwood Town Shopping Centre. The centre is anchored by Heron Foods (budget frozen food grocer) and accompanied by smaller convenience outlets (Snakeys Mini Market and LTV Vape Bar).
140. A small market takes place along Cannock Road, situated in front of the shopping centre. It operates on the 2nd Sunday of each month from April to October,

between 9:30 am to 2:00 pm, offering a variety of goods including baked items, accessories and giftware.

141. Morrisons and Aldi are two large anchor convenience outlets that sit along Milestone Way and form part of the town centre, south of Burntwood Shopping Centre. The stores also support dedicated parking; 410 and 42 car parking spaces, respectively.
142. There is a range of retail services across the defined centre including beauty services, a tattoo parlour, a post office, and a travel agency. Notably, there are no national high street banks or building societies within Burntwood Town Centre.
143. The leisure offering in Burntwood is limited, with little to no evening or night-time activity. Existing facilities include a gym, a gambling venue, a library and a social club, The Firs Working Men's Club, which hosts some shows and events, which is open till 11pm and 12am on Saturdays. There are no bars within the centre; however, there is one pub, Vintage Liquid Taphouse. An additional pub is situated a short distance outside the town centre boundary.
144. There are five restaurants in the town centre, such as Major Curry Affair (Indian Restaurant), Pasha (Bangladeshi Restaurant) and Cortina Italian Restaurant (Italian Restaurant). Fast-food outlets in Burntwood include Domino's Pizza and a McDonald's drive-thru, which is a large standalone unit. There are a small number of independent fast-food outlet stores; Snakeys Fish Bar (Fish and Chips take-away) and Joe's Pizza Company (Pizza take-away).

VACANCIES

145. One vacant unit is identified within Burntwood Town Shopping Centre.
146. The Blue Hoarded Site, at Milestone Way, southwest of Burntwood Town Centre, there is a large outstanding undeveloped site. The site is vacant, imparting a substantial feeling of desolation to the central area. The proposed development aims to establish a new retail and leisure hub, featuring five large commercial units, three drive-thru restaurants, new access roads, dedicated parking areas, and landscaping, currently pending planning approval.

NATIONAL MULTIPLES

147. Due to its size, Burntwood has more independent representation than multiple national representations, attracting fewer national multiple operators than Lichfield.
148. Morrisons and Aldi are two large multiple national convenience anchors, located south of the centre. Snap Fitness, Costa and St Giles Hospice are adjacent to Burntwood Town Shopping Centre on Chase Terrace, forming a small parade of stores along with a car park to service the stores. Between these stores and Morrisons, a McDonald's drive-thru is located.
149. National representation present in Burntwood Town Shopping Centre are Papa Johns, Age UK and Betfred, and Ladbrokes. Other national multiples across the centre include Domino's Pizza located on High Street.

Stakeholder Feedback

150. Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to provide feedback on the centres from those who have strong connection to the area and a vested interest in it. Stakeholder feedback collected on Burntwood can be summarised as follows:

Key Strengths of Burntwood

- Strong community spirit – loyalty to local shops
- Central location
- Good connection to M6
- New housing bringing in younger families

Key challenges/ local issues for Burntwood

- Lack of public transport and connections to other centres (such as Lichfield, Cannock and Walsall)
- Lack of investment for development (e.g. health centre)
- Dying high street; Sankeys Corner has been underfunded and in need of urgent investment
- Limited shopping offer

Key opportunities for Burntwood

- Investment in Chasewater will increase visitors
- Removal of restrictions of 'just housing proposals', Burntwood can now be developed further into a town centre
- Further visitors from Walsall and Rugeley could be attracted with the right offering
- Develop into a stronger retail centre, helped by plans at Blue Hoarding site

What is lacking in Burntwood for residents, business and visitors

- A good comparison offer (clothing, footwear, home accessories)
- Good environmental quality – general maintenance and upkeep
- Leisure and entertainment facilities

Key competing centre/locations

- Lichfield
- Walsall

How the role of Burntwood is likely to change over the next 5 to 10 years

- Increased retail units with current plans (Blue hoarded site), but no limitations on further change due to Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) land restrictions
- Development of more homes in and around the centre

SUMMARY

151. We conclude that Burntwood is currently a functional centre, providing local residents with a good mix of day-to-day uses. The centre is small but meets all everyday needs, with a slightly low level of comparison retail. Chase Terrace, which accommodates foodstore anchors (Aldi and Morrisons) provides a more modern and appealing hub for leisure services, while the shopping centre itself is occupied by mainly independent operators. Investment in the shopping centre would be welcome to provide a boost to its environmental quality, which could help increase footfall to this part of the town centre.

5. IN-CENTRE SURVEY AND ANALYSIS

152. This section briefly sets out the key headline findings of the face-to-face street interview (In-Centre) surveys conducted across Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre.
153. These survey results provide further robust evidence as to the relative attraction, performance, vitality and viability of Lichfield and Burntwood for those people who live, work, shop, eat and drink in the centres, amongst other things.
154. Full results of the In-Centre Survey responses are provided in **Volume 3**.

SURVEY METHOD

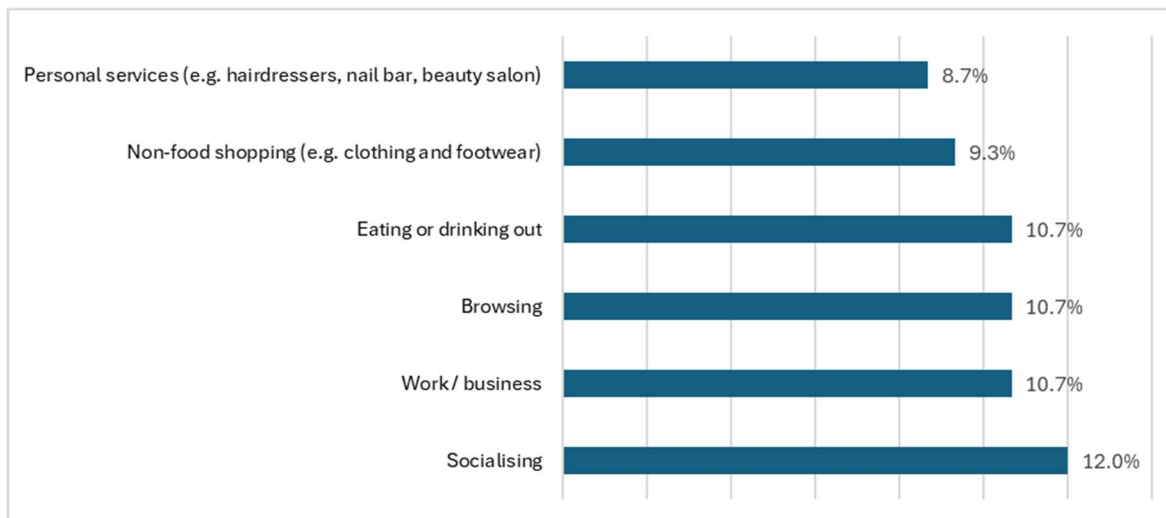
155. NEMS Market Research was commissioned in June 2025 to conduct an independent face-to-face survey amongst a sample of visitors to Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre to further inform the performance and perception of each. The interviews were conducted between Wednesday 16th July and Saturday 1st August 2025 by trained professional interviewers. In total, some 250 face-to-face interviews were carried out (150 in Lichfield City Centre and 100 in Burntwood Town Centre) at different pre-determined locations across each centre, as agreed with the Council. These locations were:
 - Lichfield City Centre: Along Market Street (from City Arcade to Breadmarket Street) and along Baker's Lane (Three Spires Shopping Centre, from Bore Street to Card Factory store)
 - Burntwood Town Centre: Along Cannock Road and within Burntwood Town Shopping Centre
156. The main aims and objectives of the survey were wide-ranging and included identifying: respondents' main purpose for visiting the centre on the day of their interview; what they "like" about the centre; what they "dislike"; and what improvements, if any, would make them visit the centre more often. Specific questions relating to leisure and the evening offer were also asked.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Lichfield

157. The figure below sets out the main reasons for respondents visiting the centre. As can be seen, 'socialising' was the most common answer at 12.0%, followed by 'work/ business', 'browsing', and 'eating and drinking out', each mentioned by 10.7% of respondents.

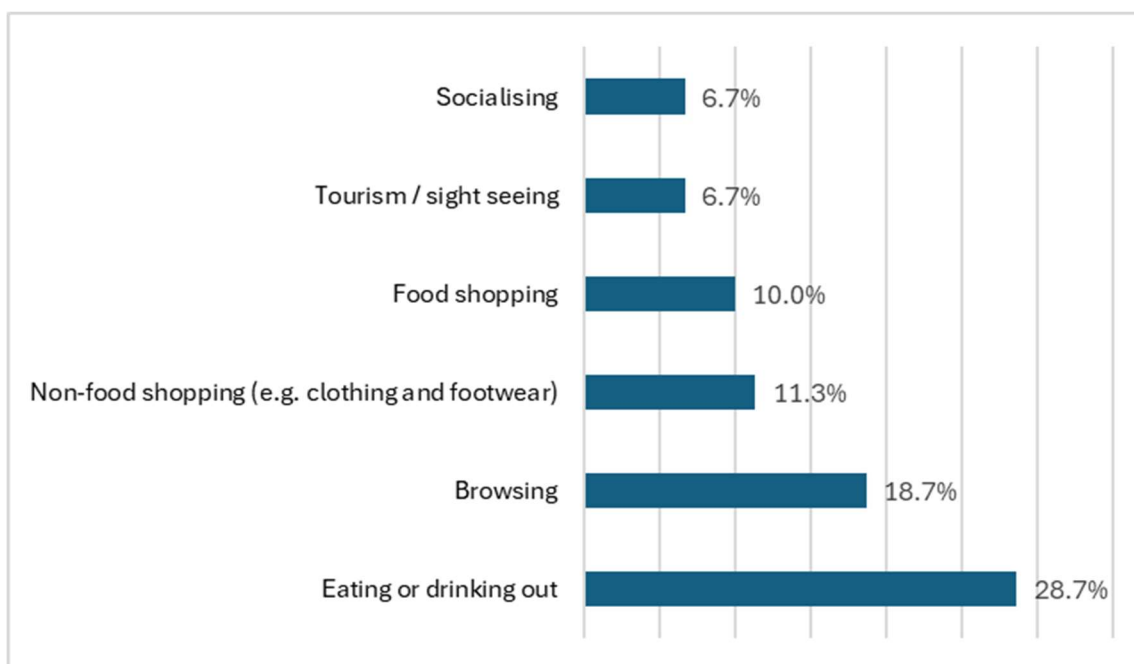
Figure 10: Main reasons for visiting



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

158. The figure below sets out the secondary reason for respondents in the centre, with the highest being 'eating or drinking out' accounting for 28.7% of the responses, followed by 'browsing' at 18.7%.

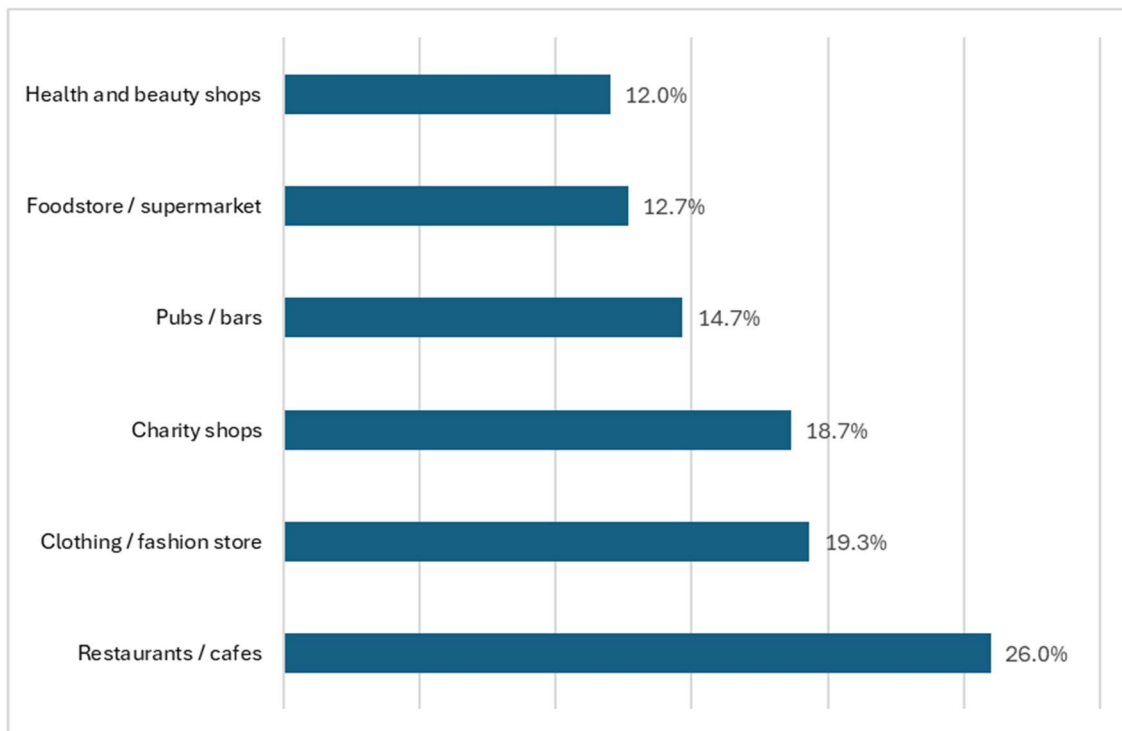
Figure 11: Other reasons for visiting



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

159. The figure below shows that the most common answer to what types of shops, businesses and services respondents intended to visit was 'restaurants/cafes', at 26.0%. Other common answers were 'clothing/fashion stores' at 19.3% and 'charity shops' at 18.7%. 'Pubs and bars' were mentioned by 14.7% of respondents. Although pubs, bars and banks ranked fourth overall, they were not selected by any of the 36 respondents that were aged 18 to 34.

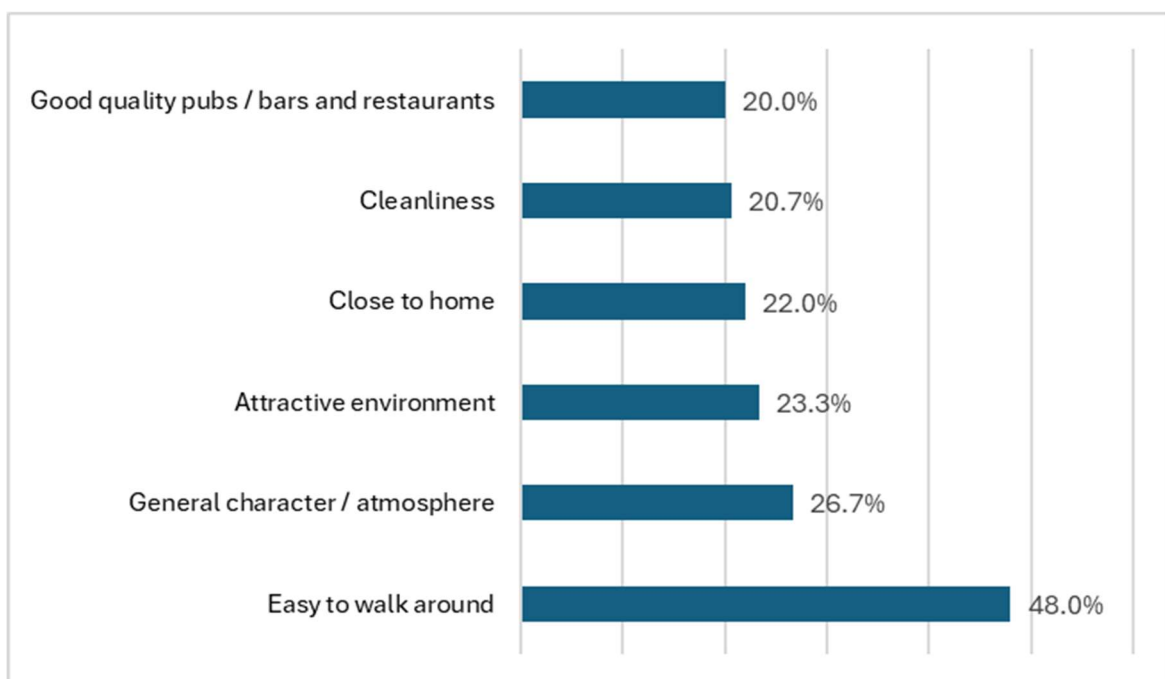
Figure 12: What shops, businesses or services are visited



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

160. The figure below shows that the most common answer to what they like about the centre was that it's 'walkable', which almost half of the respondents mentioned. The second most popular response was the 'character and atmosphere', some 26.7%, followed by an 'attractive environment' at 23.3%.

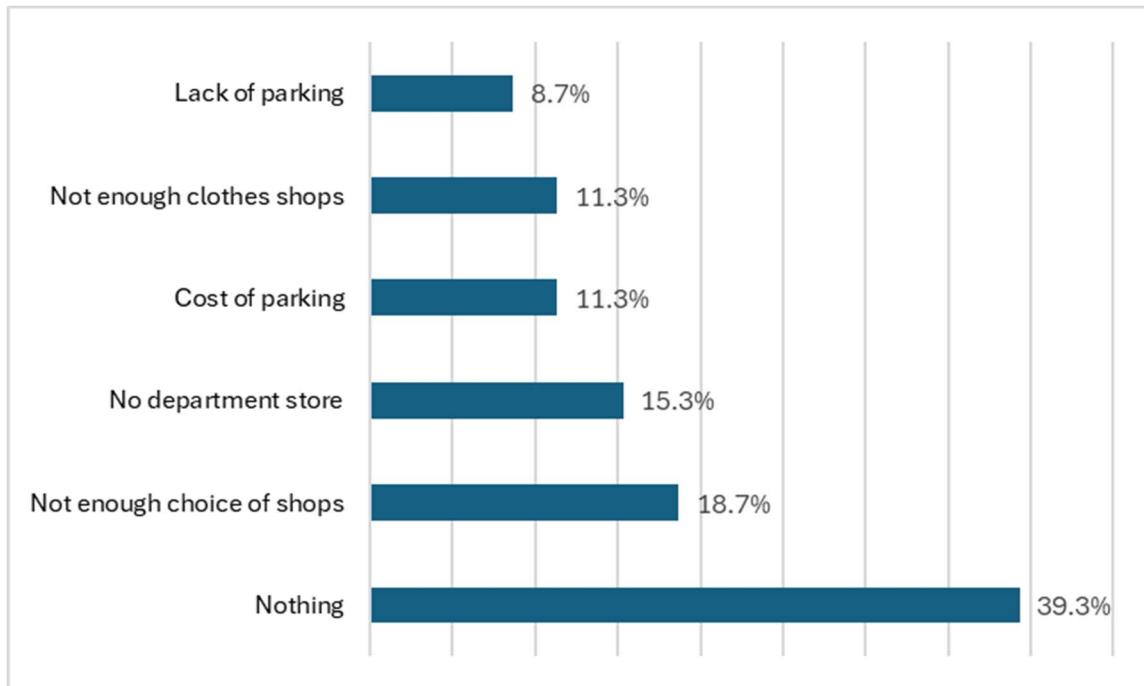
Figure 13: What is liked about the centre



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

161. The figure below shows that the most common answer for what they dislike about Lichfield was 'nothing', at 39.3%, with the second most common answer being 'not enough choice of shops' at 18.7%.

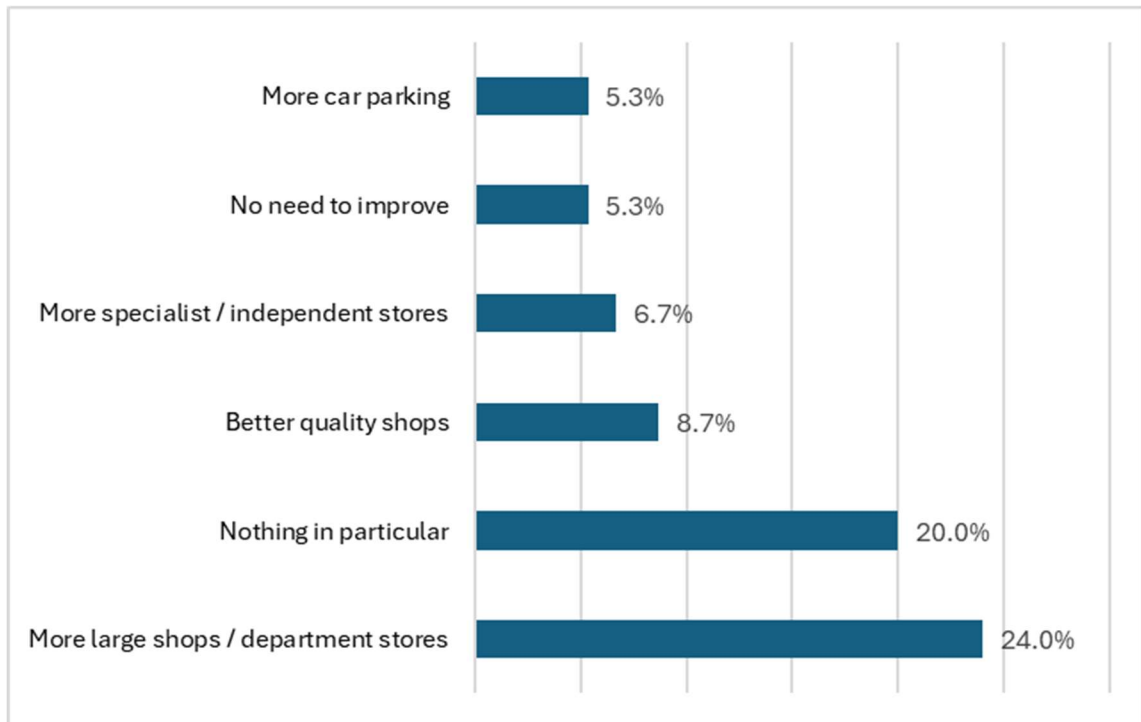
Figure 14: What is disliked about the centre



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

162. The figure below shows that the most common answer for what improvements would encourage them to visit Lichfield more often. The results showed that 'more large shops and department stores' was mentioned the most at 24.0%. The second most common answer was 'nothing' at 20.0%.

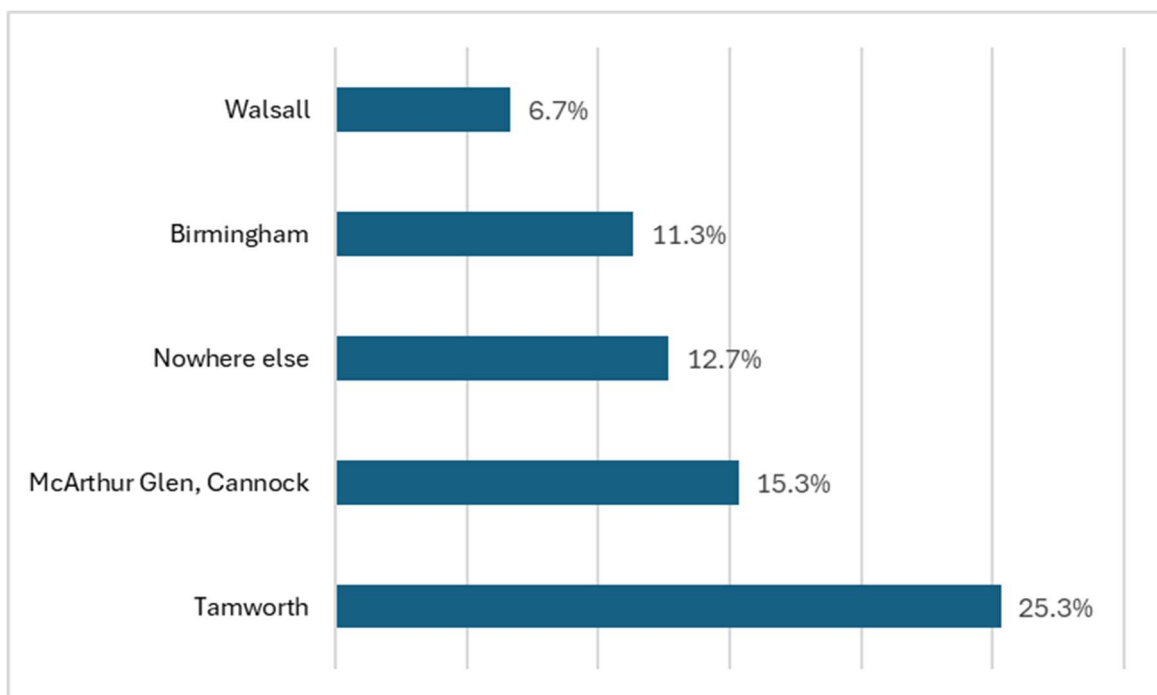
Figure 15: Main improvements to the centre



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

163. The figure below shows that the most common answer for where the respondents go for retail and leisure was Tamworth at 25.3%, followed by McArthur Glen in Cannock at 15.3%.

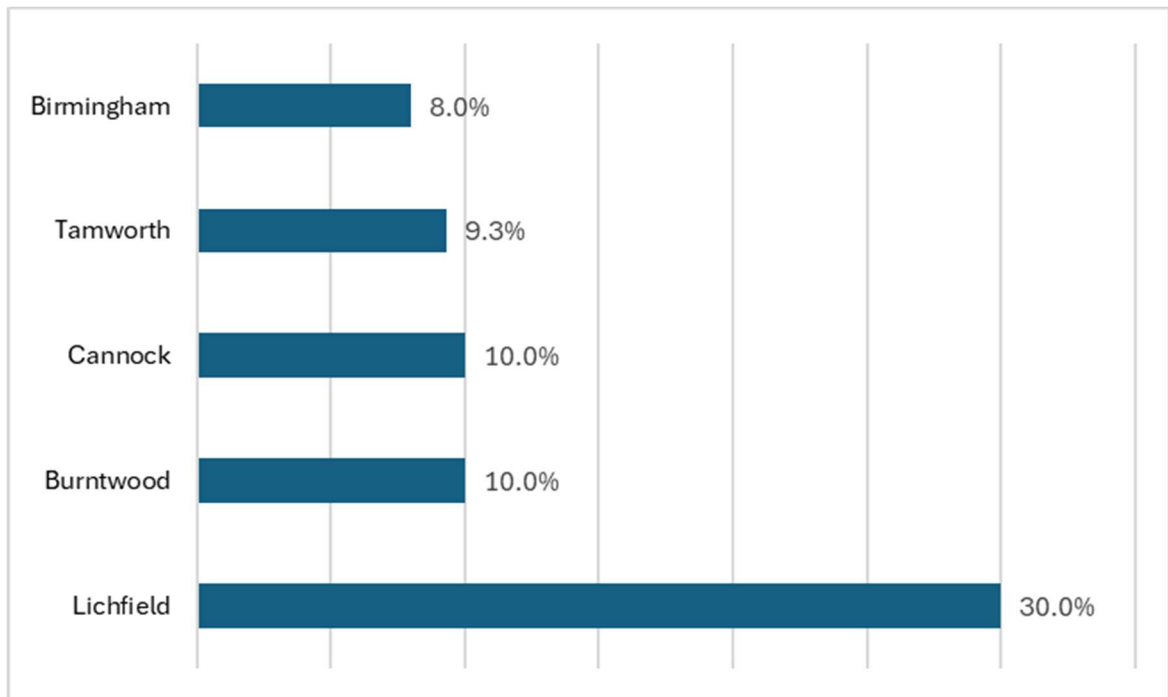
Figure 16: Where respondents usually visit for retail and leisure



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

164. The figure below shows where respondents would usually go to eat and drink out. The most common response was Lichfield, selected by 30.0% of participants, followed by Burntwood and Cannock (both at 10.0%).

Figure 17: Where respondents usually visit to eat and drink



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

165. The figure below shows what improvements would encourage visits for food and beverage, and hospitality in Lichfield. The most common answer was 'free parking' at 15.3%. 'Cheaper parking' was also mentioned as the sixth most common answer at 8.0%. More evening leisure provision was a key theme in responses to this question.

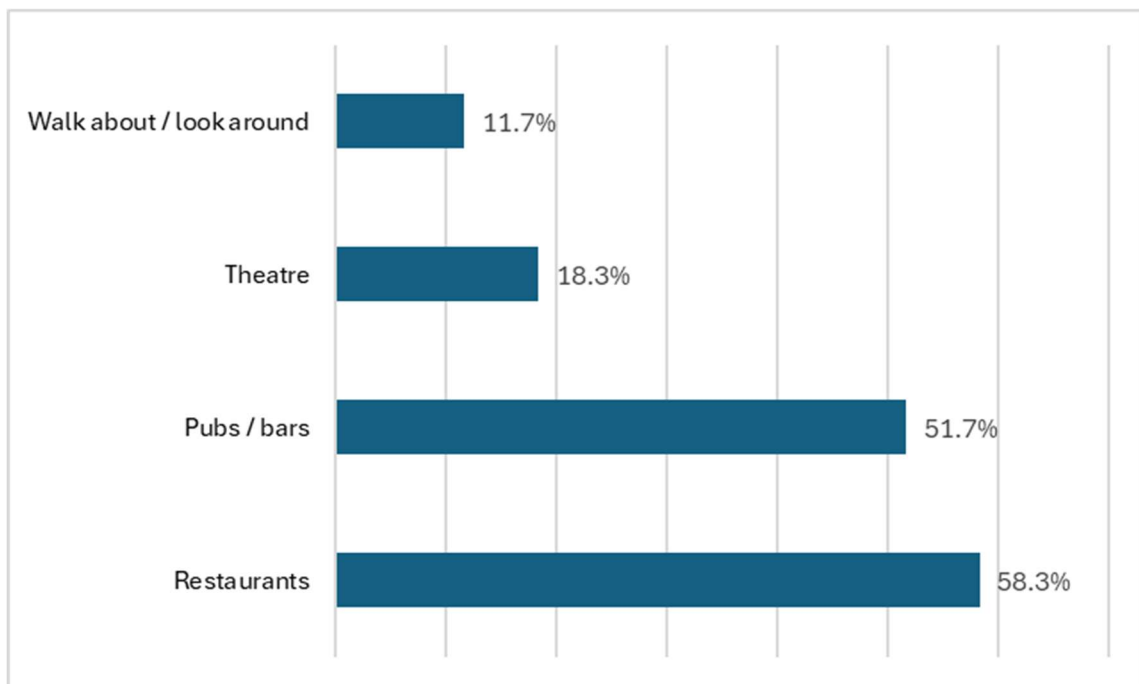
Figure 18: Improvements to increase F&B / hospitality



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

166. The figure below shows the main reasons for visiting the centre during the evening. The most common answer with over half the respondents was 'restaurants' at 58.3% closely followed by 'pubs and bars' at 51.7%.

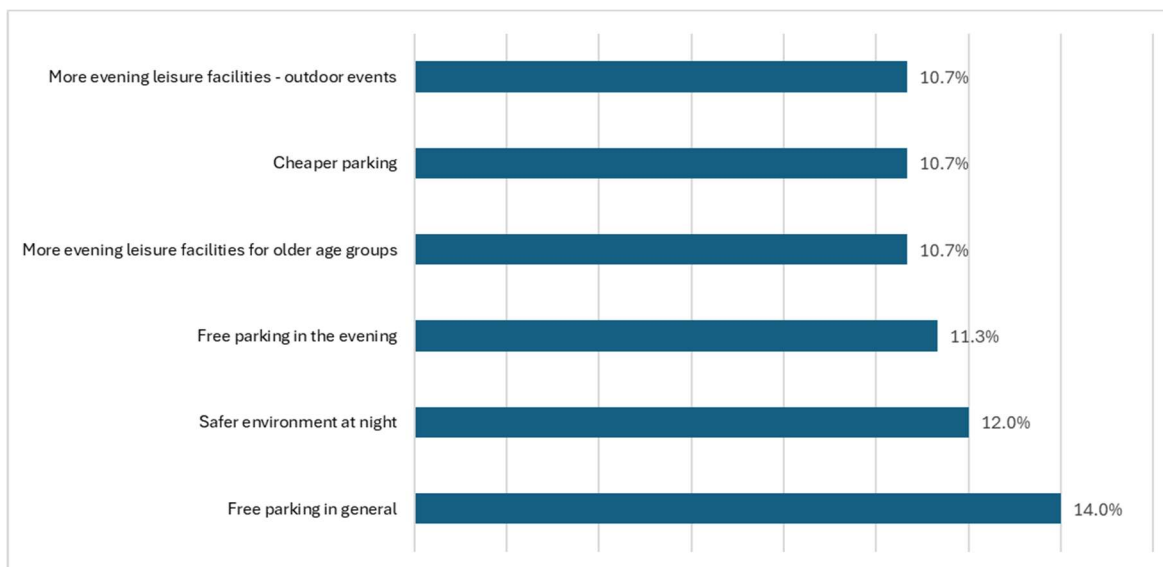
Figure 19: Main reason for visiting during the evening



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

167. The figure below shows the main improvements that were suggested to increase evening visits. Parking was mentioned three times: 'free parking in general' ranked first with 14.0% of responses, 'free evening parking' came third with 11.3%, and 'cheaper parking' was in fifth place, at 10.7%. The second most common answer was 'safer environment at night' at 12.0%

Figure 20: Improvements to increase evening visits

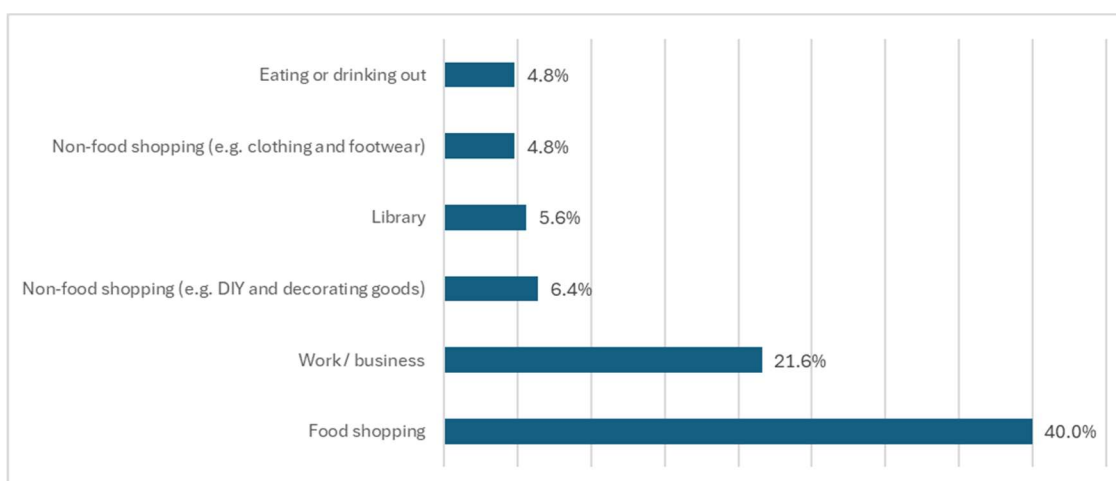


Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

Burntwood

168. The figure below sets out the main reasons for respondents visiting Burntwood centre. As can be seen, 'food shopping' was the most common answer (40.0%). This suggests that the centre is primarily visited for purchasing convenience goods. This was followed by 'work/ business' at 21.6%.

Figure 21: Main Reasons for Visiting

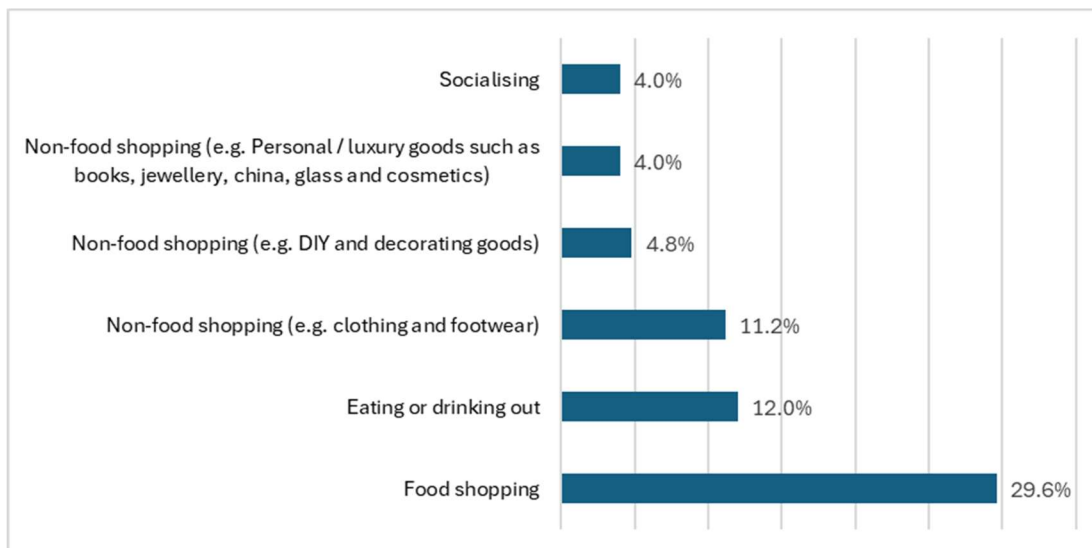


Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

169. The figure below sets out the secondary reason for respondents visiting the centre. As can be seen, 'food shopping' was the most commonly mentioned activity again, at 29.6%, aligning with it being the main reason for visiting the

centre. This was followed by 'eating and drinking' at 12.0% and 'non-food shopping clothing and footwear' at 11.2%.

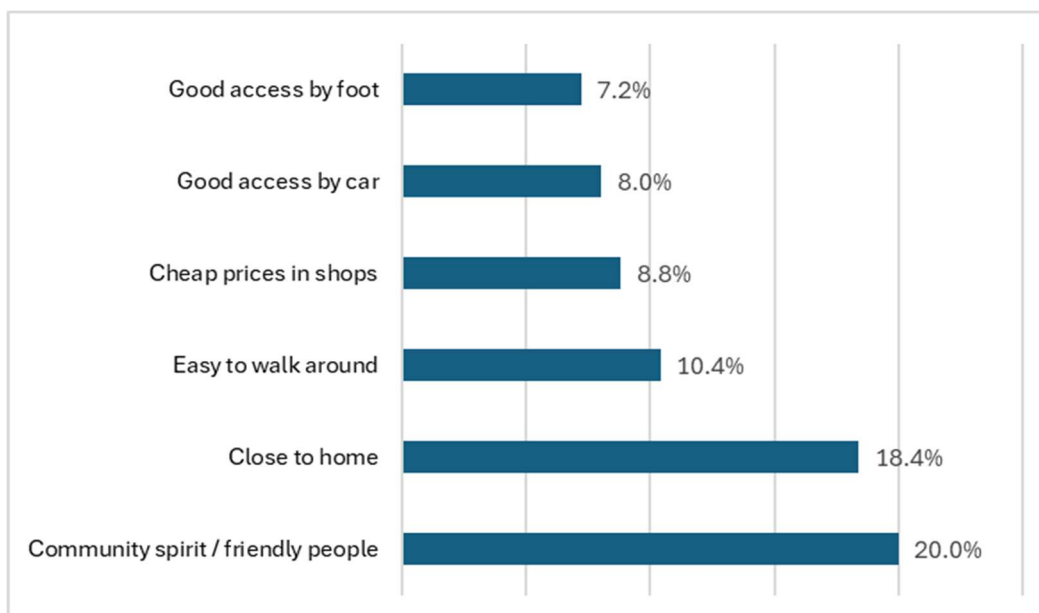
Figure 22: Other Reasons for Visiting



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

170. The figure below sets out below that the most common answer to what respondents like about the centre was it's 'community spirit and friendliness', mentioned by one in five at 20.0%. The second most popular response was that it's 'close to home' (18.4%).

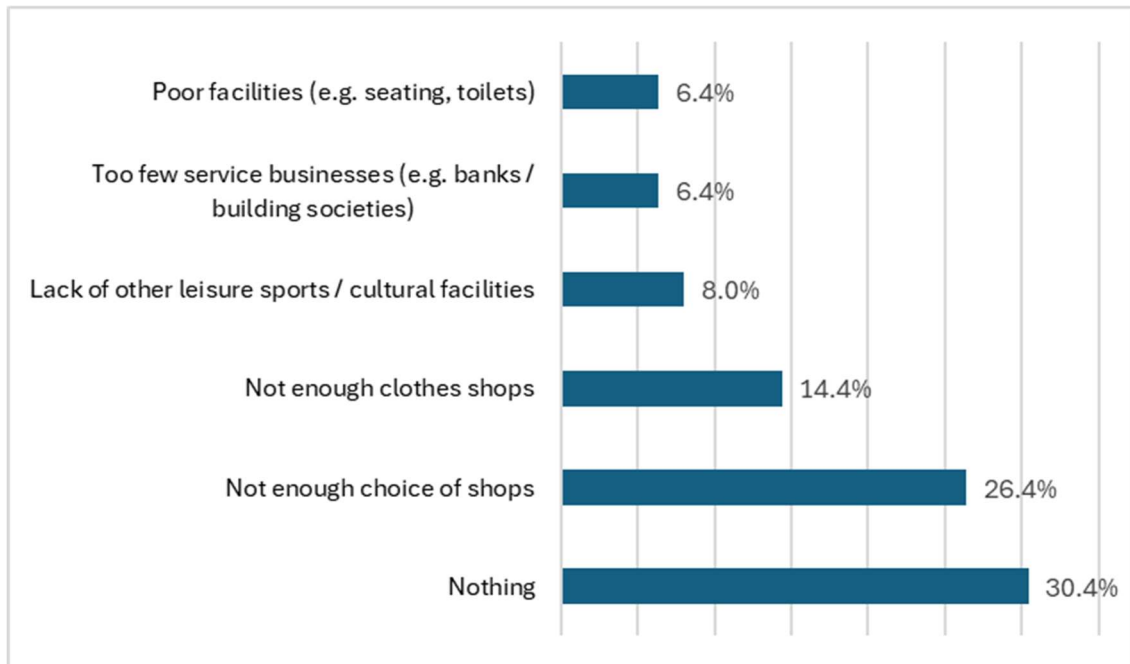
Figure 23: What is liked about the centre



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

171. The figure below sets out that the most common answers for what respondents dislike about Burntwood. The most common answer was 'nothing', at 30.4%, followed by 'not enough choice of shops' at 26.4%.

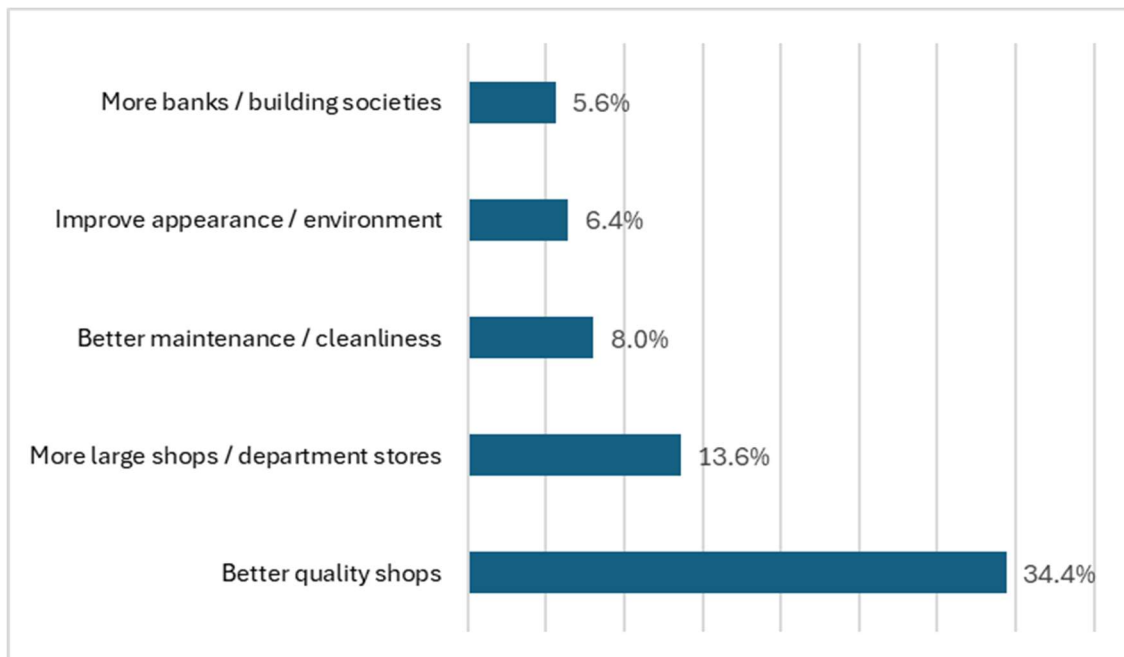
Figure 24: What is disliked about the centre



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

172. The figure below shows that the most common answers for what improvements would make respondents visit Burntwood more often were 'better quality shops' (34.4%) and 'larger shops and department store' (13.6%). 'Better maintenance/cleanliness' and 'improvement appearance/environment' were mentioned third and fourth at 8.0% and 6.4% respectively, showing that respondents thought that better environmental quality is needed in the centre.

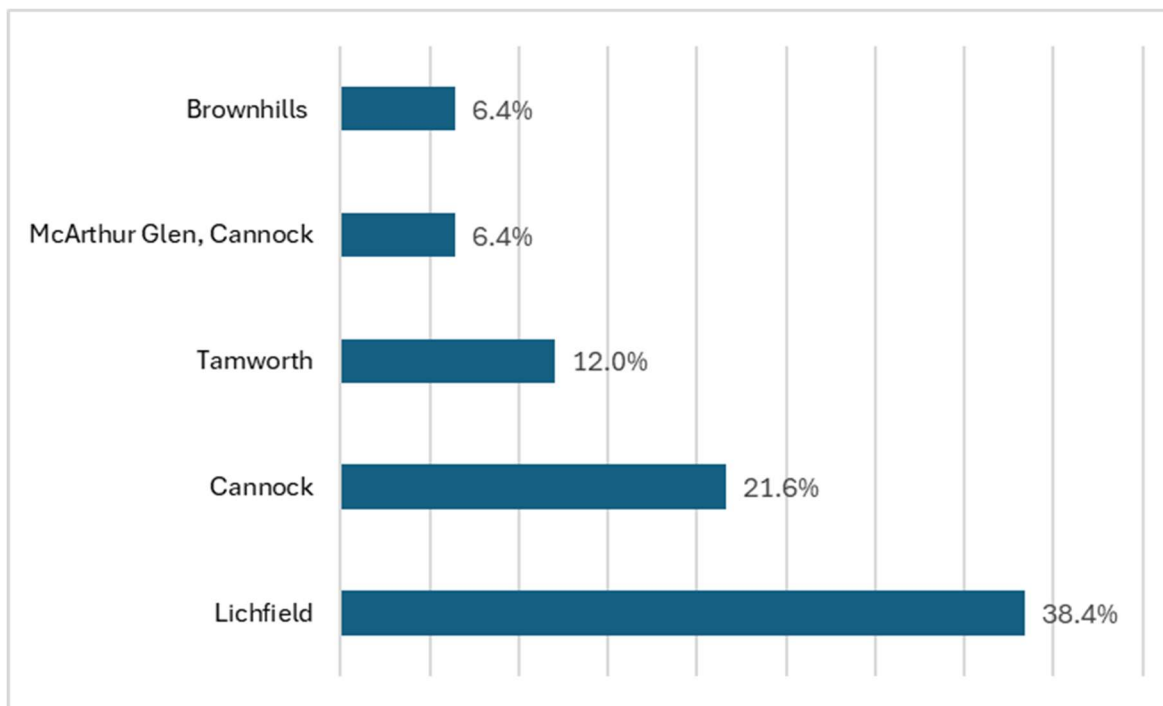
Figure 25: Main improvements to the centre



Source: NEMS Household Survey Results, Volume 3

173. The figure below shows that the most common answer for where they go for retail and leisure was Lichfield, mentioned by 38.4% of respondents. This was followed by Cannock, Tamworth and McArthur Glen in Cannock.

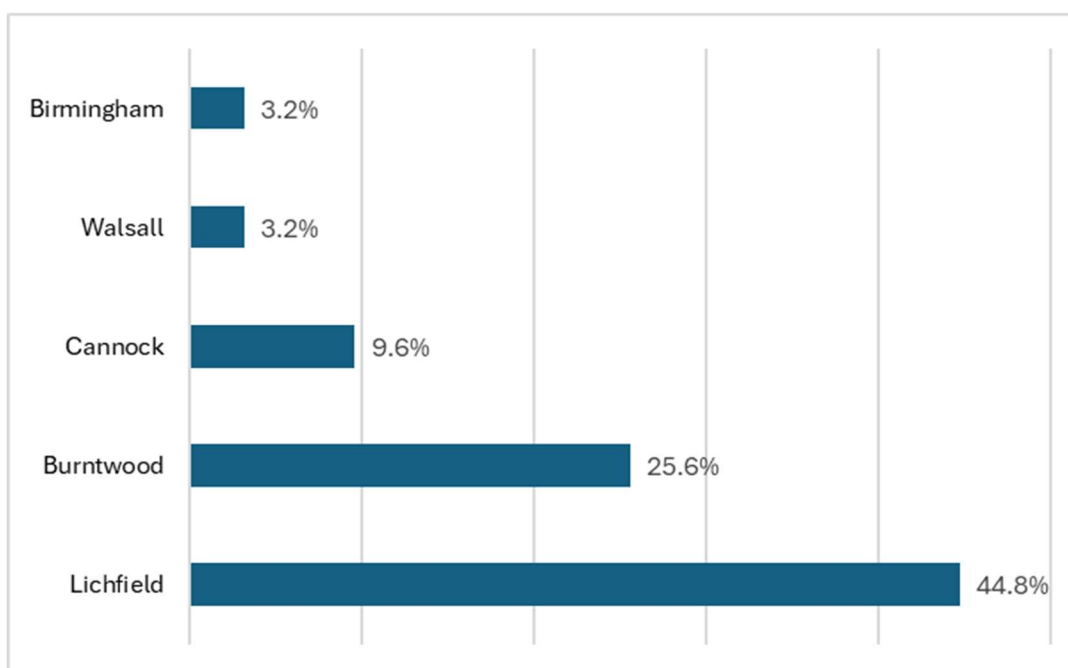
Figure 26: Where respondents visit for retail and leisure



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

174. The figure below shows where respondents would usually go to eat and drink out. The most common response was Lichfield, selected by over 44.8% of participants, followed by Burntwood at 25.6%.

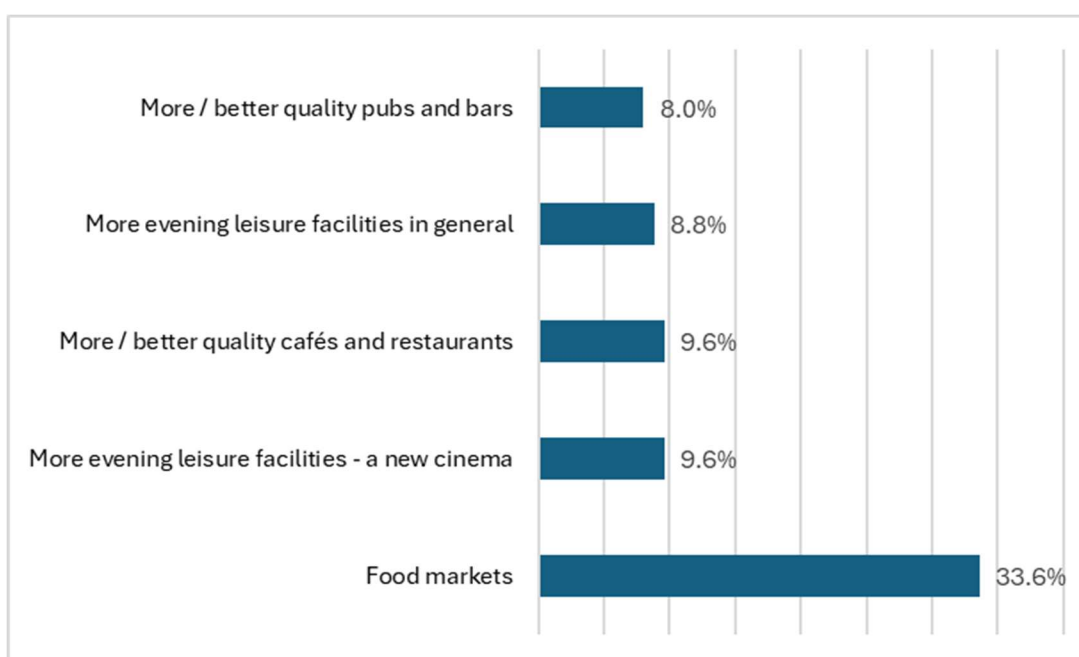
Figure 27: Where respondents visit for eating and drinking



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

175. The figure below shows what improvements would encourage visits for food and beverage, and hospitality in Burntwood. The most common answer given by one in three respondents was 'food market'.

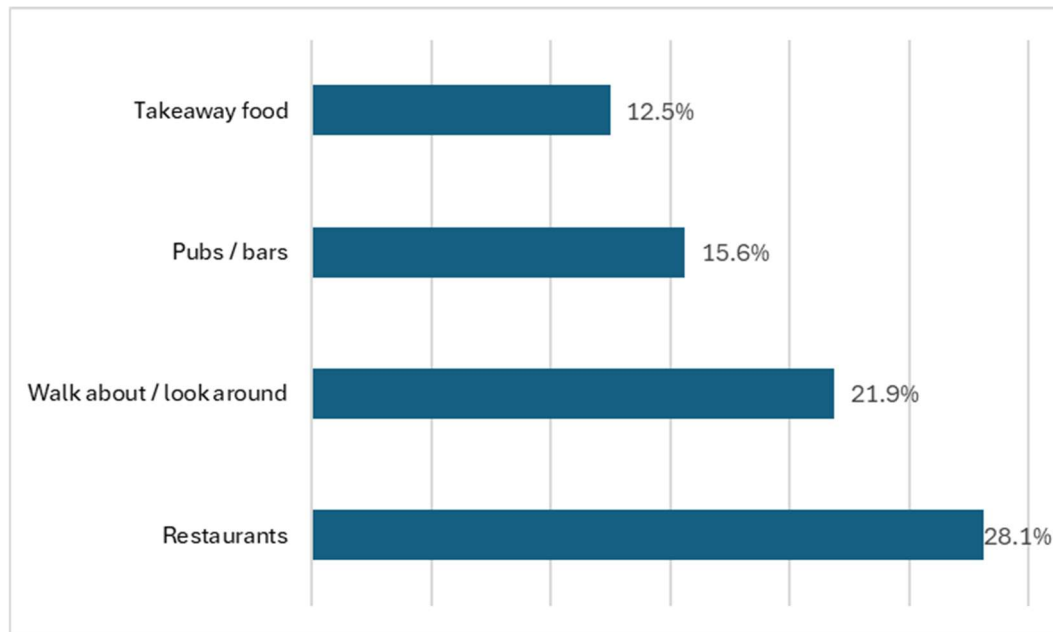
Figure 28: Improvements to increase F&B / hospitality



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

176. The figure below shows the main reasons for visiting the centre during the evening. The most common answer was 'restaurants', at 28.1% (mentioned only by respondents aged 35+). The second most common answer was 'walk about / look around' at 21.9% (only mentioned by respondents aged 55+).

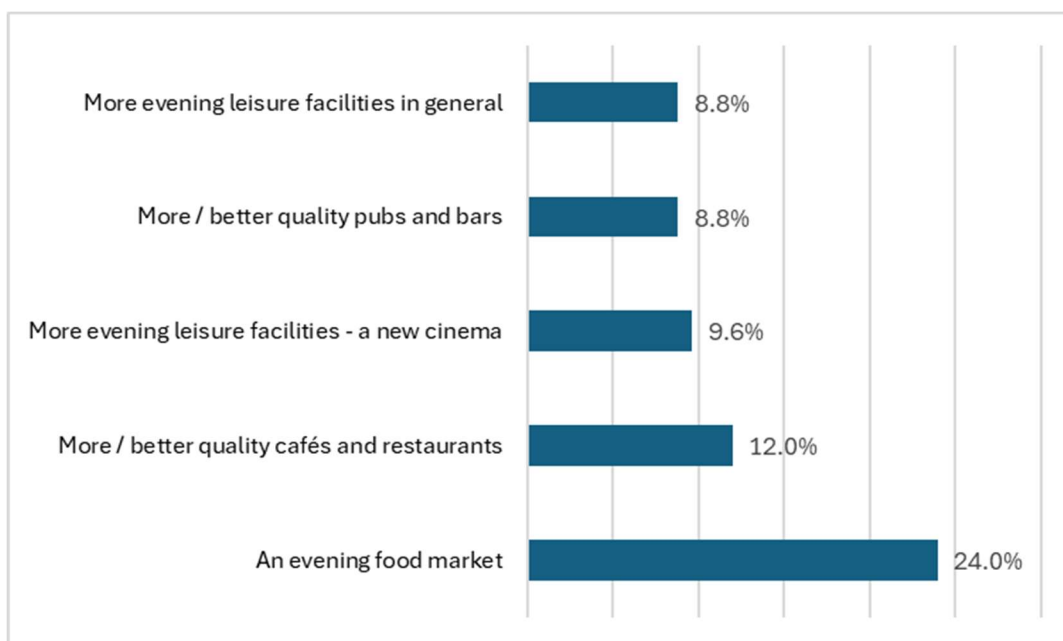
Figure 29: Main reason for visiting during the evening



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

177. The figure below shows the main possible improvement that would increase evening visits was 'an evening food market' – almost one in four gave this response. The remaining answers were related to more/ better quality leisure services of cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars and more evening-oriented facilities like cinema.

Figure 30: Improvements to increase evening visits



Source: NEMS In-Centre Survey Results, Volume 3

6. CATCHMENT, COMPETITION & MARKET SHARES

EXPERIAN INSIGHTS DATA

- 178. To provide the necessary information on expenditure patterns in the adopted Study Area, data has been obtained from Experian Insights.
- 179. Experian Insights uses actual transaction data from 4 million customers across the UK. This information can be used to identify how much money is spent in specified locations and the origin of that spend (i.e. customer home location), using different levels of geography and against typical retail and leisure categories. This allows a detailed understanding of actual customer behaviour.
- 180. For this study, the data has been provided for the following:

STUDY AREA

- 181. The Study Area is defined by the administrative boundary for Lichfield District Council, as shown on the map provided at Appendix 1, Volume 2.
- 182. The Study Area is used to inform the level of expenditure retained by identified settlements within the study area, including Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre and the geographies for their respective settlement areas.
- 183. The wider settlement area for Lichfield City Centre is disaggregated to identify the key Out of Centre retail and leisure facilities, such as Imperial Retail Park, edge of centre foodstores (Tesco and Lidl), and Out of Centre foodstores (Waitrose and Morrisons). The analysis also considers transaction data for the District's key rural centres villages. All other transactions that comprise remaining parts of the District are aggregated and classified under 'Elsewhere'.
- 184. To better understand expenditure outflows from the area, expenditure from the Study Area to the key competing centres are identified and assessed, such as Cannock, McArthur Glen Cannock, Tamworth, Birmingham, etc.
- 185. The table overleaf sets out the identified locations for the assessment:

Table 5: Study Area

Study Area	Outside of Study Area
Lichfield City Centre	Tamworth Town Centre
Elsewhere Lichfield	Tamworth Retail Parks
Burntwood Town Centre	Rugeley Town Centre
Elsewhere Burntwood	Walsall Town Centre
Lichfield Edge of Centre Food Stores	Brownhills Town Centre
Imperial Retail Park	Cannock Town Centre
Other Out of Centre Food Stores	McArthur Glen, Cannock
Alrewas	Other Retail Parks Cannock
Armitage with Handsacre	Birmingham City Centre
Fazeley	Birmingham Retail Parks
Fradley	Elsewhere in UK
Little Aston	
Shenstone	
Whittington	
Elsewhere in Study Area	

186. The market share of online convenience goods expenditure is also identified for the study area.
187. Inflows of expenditure to Lichfield District from beyond the Study Area is also provided. This expenditure is referred to throughout the report as “expenditure inflow” or “expenditure uplift”.

EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES

188. Given the purpose of this study is to determine the capacity/need for additional retail floorspace and other town centre uses/ facilities, and to examine commercial leisure trends, the expenditure data provided by Experian Insights relates to the following expenditure categories:

Table 6: Experian Insights Retail and Leisure Food & Beverage Categories

Category	Sub Sector
Comparison Retail	Baby and Childrenswear
Comparison Retail	Bags and Accessories
Comparison Retail	Beauty Products
Comparison Retail	Books and Stationery
Comparison Retail	Cards and Gifts
Comparison Retail	Department Stores
Comparison Retail	Discount Retailers
Comparison Retail	DIY and Interior Design
Comparison Retail	Electronics and Appliances
Comparison Retail	Florists
Comparison Retail	Furniture
Comparison Retail	Garden
Comparison Retail	Healthcare Providers
Comparison Retail	High Street
Comparison Retail	Household Products
Comparison Retail	Jewellery and Watches
Comparison Retail	Lingerie
Comparison Retail	Luxury Fashion
Comparison Retail	Menswear
Comparison Retail	Other - General Retail
Comparison Retail	Pets
Comparison Retail	Shoes
Comparison Retail	Sports Equipment & Clubs
Comparison Retail	Sportswear
Comparison Retail	Toys and Gaming
Comparison Retail	Unisex
Comparison Retail	Womenswear
Entertainment Leisure	Attractions and Experiences
Entertainment Leisure	Entertainment - Other
Entertainment Leisure	Live Shows and Events
Leisure Food & Drink	Cafes and Coffee Shops
Leisure Food & Drink	Fast Food Chains
Leisure Food & Drink	Food Delivery Services
Leisure Food & Drink	Mid-Tier Restaurants
Leisure Food & Drink	Pubs and Bars
Leisure Food & Drink	Restaurants
Sports/Gyms/Active Leisure	Gyms and Fitness
Supermarket (Convenience)	Alcoholic Beverages
Supermarket (Convenience)	Confectionary
Supermarket (Convenience)	Convenience
Supermarket (Convenience)	Corner Shops and Newsagents
Supermarket (Convenience)	Grocery Delivery
Supermarket (Convenience)	Health and Nutrition
Supermarket (Convenience)	Non-Alcoholic Beverages
Supermarket (Convenience)	Specialist Grocery
Supermarket (Convenience)	Supermarkets

189. Experian Insights transaction data estimated for a 12-month period ending 31st April 2025. As such, the data provides a good baseline for understanding how residents and visitors spend money on retail goods and leisure activities, taking account of variances that typically occur over a given year (e.g. seasonal activity).
190. The base data is provided in Appendix 2 (Volume 2) as follows:
- Table 1: Supermarket Spend
 - Table 2: Comparison Spend
 - Table 3: Leisure Food & Drink Spend
 - Table 4: Entertainment
191. The remainder of this section presents the market share analysis for convenience goods expenditure.

RETAIL SPEND PATTERNS

192. The data supplied by Experian Insights on retail spend is presented in Tables 1-3 of Appendix 2, Volume 2.
193. Population and retail expenditure data for the study zones, which combined represent the Lichfield District Council area have also been obtained from Experian, which is set out in Tables 1 to 5 of Appendix 3, Volume 2. These calculations are applied to the transactional data to estimate the distribution of convenience and comparison expenditure across the identified centres within and outside of the Study Area. The results are presented in percentage and monetary terms for the base and forecast years in Tables 1-8 of Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 (Volume 2) for convenience and comparison, respectively.
194. The resulting tables provide useful information on spending patterns within Lichfield District for convenience and comparison retail spend and within the individual centres. Key findings are noted below.

SUPERMARKET/CONVENIENCE RETAIL SPEND

195. Supermarket expenditure represents transactions made at foodstores, supermarkets, and convenience stores, and includes national multiples and independent operators. This form of expenditure is also referred to as convenience retail expenditure.
196. The market share analysis of Experian Insights data on convenience retail spend is set out in Tables 1-8 of Appendix 4 (Volume 2) and are summarised in the table below and follow on paragraphs. The allocation of expenditure is represented as percentage of total expenditure for the zone or the total Study Area, which is referred to as 'market share' or 'market shares'. The percentage baseline convenience spend market shares for 2025 are presented in Table 1 of Appendix 4.
197. The distribution of spend on convenience retail (as evidenced by Experian Insight's data on supermarket spend) would normally be expected to reflect proximity to home and the degree of available convenience retail facilities. This is

generally the case for Lichfield (and for most foodstore and convenience store catchments) where convenience and supermarket provision is strong in the two settlement areas for Lichfield City and Burntwood.

198. The overall retention rate for the convenience spend for the Study Area as a whole is 43.9%, which is considered to be an underperforming level of retention. Typically, retention rates are higher for sub-regional locations and particularly given that the District is well served by large foodstores. We consider the leakage of expenditure later in the analysis.
199. Online convenience shopping market share for the Study Area is 16.4%, which is slightly lower than the national average identified by Experian in 2025 (18.6%).
200. We note the following results for market share for centres and other retail location in the District:
201. **Lichfield City Centre** – attracts just 1% of Study Area expenditure, which will be influenced by a limited convenience retail offer in the centre. While the centre has an Iceland store (Market Street) and Tesco Express (Three Spires), it does not have a foodstore that serves main food shopping. Other convenience offer includes small convenience stores and CTNs (i.e. confectionary/tobacconists/newsagents).
202. **Lichfield City Edge of Centre** – includes Tesco the Superstore and Aldi stores on Church Street and attract a combined 3% market share of Study Area expenditure.
203. **Imperial Retail Park** – includes the Lidl, Iceland Food Warehouse, and B&M stores and attract a combined 4.3% market share of Study Area expenditure.
204. **Other Out of Centre Foodstores (Lichfield City)** – attracts the greatest share of retained Study Area expenditure at 11.9% and includes the Morrisons store (Beacon Street) and Waitrose (Stonnyland Drive).
205. **Elsewhere Lichfield** – includes other stores serving local neighbourhoods and smaller standalone stores that fall within the defined settlement boundary for Lichfield City, which attract a combined 5.2% market share of Study Area expenditure.
206. **Burntwood Town Centre** – attracts 3.5% market share of Study Area expenditure which is comparatively higher to other identified locations in the District. The market share result will be influenced by the presence of Morrisons (High Street) and Aldi (Bridge Cross Road), with Heron Foods (Burntwood Shopping Centre) also contributing to market share retention.
207. **Elsewhere Burntwood** - includes other stores serving local neighbourhoods and smaller standalone stores that fall within the defined settlement boundary for Burntwood. These stores attract a combined Study Area market share of 9.6% which is surprisingly high. Noted stores in this area include small Co-op stores in Burntwood Green and Morley Road, and franchise and independent operators in neighbourhood centres/ parades.
208. **Key Rural Centres** – combined, the 7 centres attract a Study Area market share of 2.5%. Most of the centres are served by a small Co-op or franchise retailer.

Market share at centre level is minimal and reflects lower spending levels linked to low catchment populations. It should be noted that no data is identified for Fazeley

209. **Elsewhere in the Study Area** – attracts a 3% market share and includes all local and standalone stores outside the settlement boundaries for Lichfield City and Burntwood, and key rural centres.
210. Generally, the analysis shows that the presence of main foodstores are driving market share retention across the District and the analysis suggests that convenience stores serving local neighbourhood in Burntwood also have an important role.
211. For Lichfield City Centre, the lack of main food provision highlights the potential lost opportunity to capture spend and associated linked trips with main food shopping. However, the proximity of edge of centre foodstores may support an element of linked trips and it is acknowledged that there will be limitations on where new foodstores could be provided within the defined City Centre.
212. The role of main food stores in supporting retained expenditure is evident for Burntwood, although the Morrisons and Aldi are somewhat disconnected from the rest of the town centre. Therefore, linked trip opportunities between the foodstores and Burntwood Shopping Centre may be limited. This will be explored further on analysis of the in-centre surveys conducted in Burntwood (Section 6).
213. Earlier it was highlighted that retention rates for convenience goods expenditure are lower than expected. The result suggests that existing provision is not meeting the needs of District residents despite what is considered to be a good range of foodstores. The transaction data identifies that 2.6% of study expenditure is diverted to Out of Centre foodstores to Tamworth and 2% to foodstores at retail parks around Cannock. However, some 32.1% is diverted to other locations outside of Lichfield District.

COMPARISON RETAIL SPEND

214. The findings of the comparison retail spend analysis are set out in Tables 1-8 in Appendix 5 (Volume 2). The percentage baseline comparison goods market shares for 2025 are presented in Table 1 of Appendix 5.
215. Comparison spend retained within Lichfield District is low with retailers retaining only 17.3% of total Study Area expenditure. However, the low rate of retention is explained by strong competition with nearby major shopping destinations and online offer, which we discuss later.
216. We note the following results for market share for centres and other retail location in the District:
217. **Lichfield City Centre** – captures 6.1% of Study Area expenditure and accounts for over a third of retained Study Area expenditure.
218. **Imperial Retail Park** - no transactions were identified for Imperial Retail Park, with transactions only identified for the anchor foodstores.

219. **Elsewhere Lichfield** – attracts a higher market share of Study Area expenditure than the City Centre at 6.8%. It includes other retail facilities that are not located within the City Centre (or at Imperial Retail Park and edge and Out of Centre foodstores) but fall within the city's settlement area. This will include standalone comparison retailers across the city (e.g. pharmacies, hobby shops, etc), and bulky goods retailers at trade parks (e.g. Prospect Drive and Europa Way).
220. **Burntwood Town Centre and Elsewhere Burntwood** – both areas support a nominal market share value (0.2% and 1%, respectively). For the town centre in particular, the low market share reflects a very limited comparison retail offer (a charity shop and mobile phone repair shop in Burntwood Shopping Centre).
221. **Key Rural Centres** – the District's seven key rural centres capture a combined Study Area market share of 1.6% which reflects the limited comparison retail available. This is typical of rural villages where comparison retailer, if available, tends to be limited to a pharmacy.
222. **Elsewhere in Study Area** – 1.6% of Study Area expenditure is retained by comparison retailers located across the rest of the District. This will include standalone retailers located in rural areas, smaller centres and trade parks.
223. Turning to expenditure **leakage to competing centres**, approximately 39% of Study Area expenditure is lost to centres outside of Lichfield, notably to retail parks around Tamworth. Retail operators in and around Cannock (including McArthur Glen Village) attract 2.5% of Study Area spend and with a similar market share for Birmingham and its retail parks. Over a fifth of Study Area expenditure is spent at other locations in the UK.
224. **Online sales** account for an even higher rate of leakage than to competing centres, with online retailers capturing around 44% of total Study Area expenditure. The online market share is approximately six percentage points higher than the 2025 UK average indicated by Experian.
225. Typically, sales on clothing and footwear account for the highest proportion of comparison retail spend and therefore the range of offer in a centre will influence retention levels of overall comparison spend. For Lichfield, the City Centre has a number of high street fashion brands but mainly typical of small sub-regional centres. As a result, it is unsurprising that the centre is losing spend to online and higher order competing centres and shopping destinations where there is a bigger range of offer and brands.

INFLOW' FROM OUTSIDE THE STUDY AREA

226. The Experian Insights data identifies transactional spend on centres in Lichfield District made by UK visitors that reside outside of the Study Area (Lichfield District). From this we can estimate the percentage uplift on retained Study Area expenditure and by zone and centre. Expenditure inflow is estimated for the base year (2025) alongside the baseline market shares for convenience goods (Table 3, Appendix 4, Volume 2) and comparison goods (Table 2, Appendix 5, Volume 2).

227. The percentage uplift from expenditure inflow identified for centres in Lichfield are summarised below:

Table 7: Study Area Retail Expenditure & Inflow from Outside the Study Area in 2025 (£m)

Retail Location	Convenience			Comparison		
	Study Area	Inflow	Total	Study Area	Inflow	Total
Lichfield City Centre	£3.3	£1.4	£4.7	£30.6	£18.0	£48.6
Elsewhere Lichfield	£17.2	£3.5	£20.7	£34.2	£21.8	£56.1
Burntwood Town Centre	£11.2	£3.7	£14.9	£1.2	£0.7	£1.9
Elsewhere Burntwood	£31.6	£9.2	£40.8	£5.2	£3.4	£8.6
Lichfield Edge of Centre Food Stores	£10.0	£2.1	£12.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Imperial Retail Park	£14.4	£3.5	£17.8	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Other Out of Centre Food Stores	£39.4	£11.8	£51.2	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Alrewas	£2.1	£0.6	£2.7	£0.5	£0.4	£0.9
Armitage with Handsacre	£1.5	£0.2	£1.7	£0.6	£0.2	£0.8
Fazeley	£0.8	£0.9	£1.6	£0.2	£2.9	£3.1
Fradley	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0	£0.1	£0.0	£0.1
Little Aston	£0.4	£1.6	£2.0	£2.4	£12.9	£15.3
Shenstone	£1.8	£1.1	£3.0	£3.4	£5.4	£8.8
Whittington	£1.6	£0.7	£2.3	£0.7	£1.7	£2.4
Elsewhere in Study Area	£10.0	£12.2	£22.2	£7.5	£16.3	£23.8
Total Study Area	£145.1	£52.4	£197.5	£86.6	£83.7	£170.3

Notes:

The Study Area correlates to the administrative boundary for Lichfield District Council area.

228. The following provides an overview of key findings summarised in the table above:
229. **Lichfield City Centre** The majority (70%) of the City Centre's convenience and comparison goods turnover (retained expenditure) is generated by Study Area residents. Inflow on total retail spend equates to a 57% uplift on retained Study Area expenditure. The value for inflow (£m) and percentage uplift is higher for comparison retail expenditure than for convenience, which correlates with the availability of offer for the two retail types.
230. **Lichfield Edge of Centre Foodstores** are generating an uplift of 21% on retained resident Study Area convenience goods expenditure with a similar value for Imperial Retail Park (24%). Expenditure uplift is identified from convenience expenditure only. Over 80% of the turnover or expenditure for these locations is generated by Study Area residents.
231. **Other Out of Centre Foodstores**, namely Morrisons and Waitrose achieve a higher rate of uplift than other identified Out of Centre locations at 30% for convenience expenditure. While these stores primarily depend on Study Area expenditure, the proportion of turnover generated from expenditure inflow is slightly higher than for the edge of centre foodstore. This may be explained by the position of both stores at more easily accessible locations to visitors from outside

the Study Area and limited competition for the Waitrose store (the nearest alternative Waitrose stores are located 15 miles from Lichfield City).

232. **Burntwood Town Centre** generates an uplift on total retained resident Study Area expenditure of 34%, with comparison expenditure generating a higher rate than convenience. Inflow accounts for approximately a quarter of the town's turnover. The level of inflow is likely to be influenced by the centre's position on the edge of the District boundary and likelihood that the centre's retailers will capture some spend from residential communities in neighbouring Cannock Chase District.
233. **Elsewhere in Burntwood** supports a similar percentage uplift in total retail turnover to Burntwood Town Centre albeit lower in monetary terms. As with the town centre, inflow accounts for a quarter of total turnover.
234. The uplift associated with the '**Rest of District**' includes expenditure inflow to the District's rural centres and standalone stores located outside of the two settlements. Notably, inflow accounts for a higher proportion of total retail turnover, which is likely to relate to passing trade.
235. The results show the importance of visitor expenditure in supporting centre market shares, particularly for comparison retail businesses. For Lichfield City Centre, uplift is likely to be driven by visitors/tourists, and residential communities beyond the District boundary that are within a reasonable drive-time catchment (e.g. communities in Tamworth, East Staffordshire, and South Derbyshire). For Burntwood, the results suggest that Burntwood's catchment likely expands beyond the District boundary to capture trade in neighbouring Cannock Chase.

SUMMARY

236. The market share analysis indicates that Lichfield District is potentially under-performing based on the market share evidence. Retention rates for convenience and comparison retail are considered below what would be expected of a sub-regional, and that the centre is competing with foodstore provision outside of the District, while for comparison retail, the primary competition is online sales. For convenience retail, the retention rates are surprising given that the District is reasonably well served by foodstores. The absence of M&S and Sainsbury's foodstores could be a factor. Another factor may be the size of existing foodstores, such as Tesco and Morrisons which are standard size stores. The implication being that customers may be traveling out of the District to larger formats (e.g. Tesco Extra).
237. The analysis highlights the value of visitor expenditure which contributes to a significant uplift in retained resident (Study Area) expenditure. For the Lichfield City Centre, visitor expenditure accounts for a greater proportion of total centre turnover than retained resident expenditure, highlighting the crucial role visitors have in supporting the City Centre's economy.

7. RETAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 238. Having used the Experian Insights transaction data to inform our understanding of shopping spending across the Study Area, the next stage is to undertake the economic retail capacity ('need') assessment for new retail (convenience and comparison goods) floorspace in Lichfield.
- 239. Aligned with the NPPF and PPG the capacity forecasts take account of the lifetime of the plan starting from 2025 (base year) up to 2040. Whilst the study will assess outputs up to 2040, any findings beyond 2035 should be treated with caution on the basis that forecasts become less reliable after a 10-year period.

THE CREAT^e MODEL

- 240. The assessment utilises the CREAT^e economic model which has been specifically designed, developed and tested by the LSH team over more than 25 years to assess the capacity for and impact of new retail (convenience and comparison goods) floorspace development. The evidence-based model has helped to inform and guide plan-making and decision-taking at the local, sub-regional and regional level. In brief, the CREAT^e (Excel-based) model adopts a transparent 'step-by-step' approach in which all the key assumptions and forecasts can be easily tested.
- 241. The Experian Insights data provides the basis for the retail capacity assessment which uses the CREAT^e model to forecast actual capacity for convenience and comparison goods.
- 242. At the outset it has been assumed for the purpose of the capacity assessment that the local retail market in Lichfield is in 'equilibrium' at the base year. In other words, all existing centres/stores are broadly assumed to be trading in line with expected average ('benchmark') turnover levels. This is a reasonable approach in this case as it reflects the impact of the economic downturn and the significant growth in online sales on the trading levels and performance of retailers and stores across the UK.
- 243. The main challenge and focus for Lichfield's centres over the short/medium term will revolve around their response to a multitude of economic factors. They include: their response to evolving market trends, embedded spending habits from the COVID19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, rising business costs, and the effect of geopolitical unrest (e.g. impact of physical war and trade war escalations on supply chains). These factors will influence the ability for Lichfield's centres to retain existing occupiers and to redevelop/repurpose vacant retail floorspace to attract new businesses and uses.
- 244. In simple terms, any residual expenditure available to support new retail floorspace over the forecast period will be generated by the difference between the forecast growth in 'current' (survey-derived) turnover levels and the growth in 'benchmark' turnovers based on applying robust year-on-year 'productivity' ('turnover efficiency') growth rates to all existing and new retail floorspace.

245. It is important to restate that medium to long term forecasts should be treated with caution, as they will be influenced by the dynamic changes in economic, demographic and market trends. As described previously (see Section 2), the NPPF (paragraph 90a) states that local planning authorities should meet the need for retail and town centre uses “looking at least ten years ahead”. The Planning Practice Guidance also states that given the uncertainty in forecasting long-term retail trends and consumer behaviour, assessments “may need to focus on a limited period (such as the next five years) but will also need to take the lifetime of the plan into account and be regularly reviewed”. Therefore, whilst this study assesses retail capacity up to 2040, greater weight should be placed by the local planning authority on forecasts over the next five (to 2030 to ten-year period (to 2035).
246. The updated capacity forecasts set out in this section provide the Council with a broad indication of the (quantitative) need for new retail (comparison and convenience goods) floorspace in Lichfield and its main centres. In turn, this will inform whether there is a need to identify and allocate sites to meet any forecast need, in accordance with the advice set out in the NPPF (paragraph 86).
247. The key steps in the retail capacity assessment, and the main assumptions and forecasts underpinning the CREAT^e Model are described below.

BASE YEAR POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS

248. The 2025 (‘base year’) study zone population estimates and projections over the study period (to 2037) are informed by projections generated from the Council’s Strategic Housing Market Assessment which calculates the future population based on housing targets up to 2043. The distribution of Lichfield’s population is based on zonal population estimates and projections calculated by Office of National Statistics’ (ONS).
249. The calculations on population are set out in Table 1, Appendix 3 (Volume 2) and show that the total Study Area population is forecast to increase by over +5,316 persons (+4.9%) over the 15-year study period to 2040 from 109,008 to 114,324.

EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA LEVELS AND FORECASTS

250. The baseline expenditure per capita (‘per person’) figures and forecasts are presented in Table 2 (Appendix 3, Volume 2) for convenience goods and Table 5 (Appendix 3, Volume 2) for comparison goods. The baseline (2025) average expenditure per capita figures have been derived from our in-house Experian Location Analyst GIS (please note all expenditure and turnover figures are expressed in 2023 prices).
251. The growth in the expenditure per capita figures by zone is informed by the forecasts published in the latest Experian Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 (RPBN22); released in March 2025. As described in the main report, Experian forecast more limited year-on-year growth in retail expenditure than previous forecasts due to the impact of long-term economic and market trends, which have been further accelerated by the impact of the pandemic.

SPECIAL FORMS OF TRADING

252. Special Forms of Trading (SFT) is deducted from the forecast retail (convenience and comparison) expenditure levels over the forecast period. For this assessment, we have used the adjustment rates published by Experian in RPN22.
253. SFT estimates are set out in Table 2 (Appendix 3, Volume 2) for convenience goods and Table 5 (Appendix 3, Volume 2) for comparison goods.
254. The SFT market shares have been adjusted to reflect the fact that a proportion of online convenience and comparison retail sales are sourced from traditional ('physical') stores rather than from dedicated ('dot com') warehouses. Experian assume 25% of SFT's market share for comparison goods and 70% for convenience goods are sales sourced from "physical" stores.
255. The baseline SFT market share identified in RPN22 is 5.2% for convenience goods and 24.1% for comparison goods in 2025. These are forecast to increase to 7.3% and 29.3% respectively by the end of the study period (2040).
256. The Experian Insights transactions data identifies online transactions rather than the wider category of SFT. However, as online accounts for a significant proportion of SFT transactions we can assume that a similar pattern in SFT market share growth will apply to online market share.

TOTAL AVAILABLE EXPENDITURE

257. Tables 3 and 5 (Appendix 3, Volume 2) forecast the growth in total available convenience goods and comparison goods retail expenditure across the Study Area up to 2040 (excluding SFT).
258. The tables for the ten-year period from 2025 to 2035 show that available convenience goods expenditure will decrease by -1.1% (-£3.4m) while available comparison goods expenditure will increase by +21.2% (+£64.5m).
259. Over the 15-year period to 2040, available convenience goods expenditure will decrease by -0.7% (-£2.1m) and available comparison goods expenditure will increase by +34.5% (+£104.9m).
260. The difference in expenditure growth between convenience and comparison goods should be viewed in the context of the fluctuating levels of spend over the past 5 years. For example, comparison retail spend dipped significantly in the first year of the Covid pandemic before recovering in 2021 as restrictions eased. However, this was followed by a three-year decline in spend to 2024 as consumers held back on spending due to the cost-of-living crisis. Growth in comparison sales is only expected to occur from 2025 (+0.1%) before stabilising at 2.5% per annum from 2027 and at 2.6% per annum from 2032.

CENTRE TURNOVER ANALYSIS

261. The next stage in the capacity assessment involves allocating transaction-based market shares identified earlier to the baseline (2025) convenience and comparison expenditure (£ million) for the Study Area. From this we can identify the expected turnover of centres in the Study Area and the monetary value of Study Area expenditure diverted to competing centres.
262. The base year (2025) monetary/turnover market shares for convenience and comparison retail are set out in Table 2 of Appendix 3 (Volume 2), respectively, which are based on expenditure allocated from the Study Area and expenditure inflow from beyond the Study Area.
263. For the retail capacity assessment, and in line with accepted approaches, the turnover analysis has been adjusted for both convenience goods and comparison goods to exclude SFT. The adjusted turnover market shares are set out for the base year and forecast years (2030, 2035 and 2040) in Tables 4 to 7 (Volume 2) and summarised in Table 8 in Appendices 4 and 5 (Volume 2).
264. The forecast turnovers are based on constant market shares, i.e. assuming no change in where people currently shop. This 'constant market share approach' is standard practice for strategic retail capacity assessments. This approach does not take account of the potential impact that new retail investment and development (both within and outside Lichfield) and variances in visitor numbers, which can influence existing shopping patterns, market shares and turnover performance over time.

FLOORSPACE PRODUCTIVITY

265. A key input to the retail capacity assessment is the application of a year-on-year floorspace 'productivity' growth rate to all existing and new retail floorspace. As described in Section 3, existing retailers will need to achieve higher annual 'productivity' growth rates to cover their increasing costs (including, for example, rising rents, business rates and wages) and to remain profitable and viable over the short, medium and long term. This is particularly the case as the competition from online retailing increases; a trend that has been significantly accelerated by the impact of the pandemic.
266. Experian provides forecasts for productivity growth rates in the form of expected changes to retail sales densities (Figures 3 and 4), with two scenarios tested, assuming (i) constant floorspace and (ii) changing floorspace. For the purposes of this assessment, we have used the 'constant' floorspace assumptions.

RETAIL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

267. Our assessment of both convenience and comparison retail capacity is provided in Tables 9 to 11, Appendix 4 (Volume 2) for convenience retail and Tables 9 to 12, Appendix 5 (Volume 2) for comparison retail.
268. The assessment is based on the assumption that retail market shares for Lichfield (retained Study Area expenditure) and at centre level remain constant. In other

words, capacity forecasts do not allow for potential changes to shopping patterns from those currently being seen.

269. Capacity forecasts are provided for the Lichfield area as a whole.
270. We have assessed a base capacity for Lichfield, which considers capacity from a no-development scenario (excluding any turnover of pipeline development of new retail floorspace, where none had been identified), which is set out in Table 10 of Appendix 4 (convenience goods) and Appendix 5 (comparison goods).
271. The capacity results at Lichfield District level identify no capacity/need for new convenience goods floorspace over entire study period (Table 11, Appendix 4).
272. Similarly, the capacity results no need for new comparison goods floorspace at Lichfield District level over the entire study period (Table 11, Appendix 5).
273. The absence of capacity for convenience and comparison goods floorspace reflects:
 - a lower rate of growth in retail expenditure per capita with negative growth for convenience goods expenditure.
 - higher rates of productivity/efficiency growth for existing retail floorspace which accounts for retailers seeking to improve the efficiency of their sales space to counter pressures from rising operational and supply costs.
 - Increasing market share of online sales.
274. The assessment indicates that there are no identified sites to accommodate new convenience or comparison goods floorspace.
275. Therefore, while the NPPF requires need to be identified for retail over a minimum 10-year period, the likelihood is that the capacity findings for Lichfield will change within that period. It is for this reason that evidence on retail spending habits should be updated every five years.

SUMMARY

276. The NPPF (paragraph 86d) is clear that local planning authorities should plan to meet the need for new retail and town centre uses by “looking at least ten years ahead”. The PPG also states that given the uncertainty in forecasting long-term retail trends and consumer behaviour, assessments “...may need to focus on a limited period (such as the next five years) but will also need to take the lifetime of the plan into account and be regularly reviewed”. Notwithstanding this, to help inform the Council’s longer-term plan-making and strategies we have assessed the potential capacity for new retail floorspace over the lifetime of the plan, up to 2037.
277. The assessment shows there is no need at District level for new convenience goods retail floorspace over the entire assessment period once planned convenience goods floorspace is accounted for. While there is capacity identified for comparison goods retail, some or all of this need could be accommodated through the existing vacant commercial accommodation. This could come in the form of the refurbishment of existing units or through redevelopment opportunities.

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278. However, where market demand presents an opportunity to improve the retail offer in the Lichfield and Burntwood centres, then this should not be discounted on the basis that there is no identified quantitative need. Where demand for new retail floorspace should arise over the plan period, then this should be directed to Lichfield's existing centres in accordance with the "town centre first" (sequential) approach detailed in national and local plan policy and guidance.

8. HOSPITALITY REVIEW & MARKET ANALYSIS

279. The hospitality industry primarily relates to food and beverage (F&B) services including restaurants, cafes (Class E(b), takeaways, pubs, and bars (Use Class Sui Generis), and accommodation services, such as hotels (Use Class C1).
280. Hospitality uses and services are an integral to a town centre's day and evening economies and supporting diversity of town centre by generating trips (by residents and visitors), stretching "dwell times" (i.e., the time people spend in centres), increasing "linked" expenditure to other shops and businesses as part of the same trip.

KEY TRENDS INFLUENCING THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

281. Hospitality is the third largest employer in the UK, with 3.5 million people working in the sector. It plays a crucial role in providing jobs and supporting livelihoods across the country according to UK Hospitality.
282. The sector directly contributes £93 billion annually to the economy and in 2022, hospitality generated £54 billion in tax receipts and £20 billion in exports and attracted £7 billion in business investment.
283. However, the industry is facing a mix of challenges and opportunities. While there has been recent revenue growth (2024 (Q4) hospitality revenues increased 10% compared to pre-pandemic levels) it is often lagging behind inflation. The sector is still struggling to fully recover from the pandemic. The key trends and challenges the sector faces include:
- **Inflationary Pressures:** Hospitality revenue growth is failing to keep pace with inflation.
 - **Enhanced Customer Experience:** Venues are adapting to changing consumer preferences, offering more than just basic services and creating immersive, social experiences. For example, restaurants have overtaken pubs and bars to become the most popular type of venue to visit particularly among Gen Z and Millennials age groupings. This shift is driven by their appetite for immersive, social, and value-driven dining experiences, with less focus on alcohol-dominated activities.
 - **Social Media Marketing:** Social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram, provide a powerful tool for marketing and driving bookings.
 - **Workforce related issues.** Brexit affected the UK's ability to attract talent and has had a broader impact on the sector, requiring businesses to adapt. Addressing the labour shortage and investing in staff skills and wellbeing are crucial for long-term success.
 - **Innovation and use of technology:** Adopting technologies like mobile check-ins and AI-driven personalisation is crucial for staying competitive.
284. In recent years, and in light of challenging retailing conditions and competition from e-commerce retail centres are fighting back by investing on their F&B and

broader commercial leisure offer to attract footfall and custom by elevating themselves to become more than just shopping locations but destinations where visitors can dine and enjoy innovative experiential activities. Traditional shopping centres are therefore widening their appeal promoting increased dwell time, spend and engaging a broader audience group. An example of this is seen at the Castle Quarter shopping Centre in Norwich. Formerly known as Castle Mall, this centre has transitioned into Norwich's premier social, leisure, and lifestyle destination spread over five floors. The leisure transformation includes:

- Superbowl UK (bowling)
- Boom Battle Bar (interactive games/bar)
- Putt Putt Social (mini golf)
- PureGym (24-hour gym)
- Hotpod Yoga
- ArrowHeadz (darts-led social hub)
- Drive Lounge (virtual driving experience)
- Crazy Club (Soft Play centre)
- Escape Hunt (Escape rooms)

285. Despite these consumer trends, Experian data (RPBN 22) on leisure spend per head, which is detailed later in this section highlights how major economic events in the past five years (notably the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis) have exposed the leisure sector as people cut back on unnecessary spending, which had severe implications for the hospitality sector in particular.
286. Any further dampening of growth rates over the short to medium term will have implications for the viability of existing leisure businesses and the demand for new space.
287. The demand for hospitality uses will therefore be influenced by broader economic conditions and prevailing consumer confidence. The key issues include:
 - macro-economic and resulting consumer sentiment (e.g. income growth, rising cost inflation, cost of living crisis, rising wage bills through increased National Insurance contributions);
 - the rise in home working and benefiting local locations and businesses;
 - changing consumer tastes and preferences (e.g. younger generation drinking less alcohol; prioritising experiences and prioritising spend)
 - rise of home delivery; and
 - the increase in the use of open spaces and pursuits.
288. Continuing uncertainty over inflation, increase in national insurance contributions, future regulation and staffing levels is said to be causing a "crisis of confidence" among business owners, which has fallen to a lower level than at any point during the pandemic. The vulnerability of the hospitality sector in particular due to soaring energy costs, crippling rises in the cost of goods and dampening consumer confidence is likely to affect the sector over the next few years further.

CONTRIBUTION OF VISITOR AND CULTURAL SECTOR IN SUPPORTING LICHFIELD'S HOSPITALITY MARKET

289. Anchored by its historic cathedral City Centre, green spaces, and well-regarded attractions, the District attracts both day-trippers and overnight visitors.
290. Recent data highlights the visitor sector's importance not only in terms of economic output and supporting Lichfield's identity as a popular visitor destination, but also is crucial role in supporting hospitality businesses:
- **Events:** In 2018/19 research indicates that around 350,000 visits were made to key local events (e.g. festivals), generating approximately £9.2 million in visitor spend of which nearly £2 million was on food and drink, and over £400,000 on accommodation within the city area (source: <https://lichfieldlive.co.uk/>). Events like the Food Festival, the Lichfield Bower, and the gin & ale festivals particularly attract visitors boosting outside-of-Lichfield spend and visitor interest.
 - **Lichfield Cathedral** is a nationally significant attraction, drawing visitors for its history, architecture, and religious importance.
 - Other attractions include the **Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum**, **Erasmus Darwin House Museum** and the National Memorial Arboretum (Alrewas), which are key visitor attractions and support on-site restaurants and/or cafes.
 - Cultural venues such as the **Lichfield Garrick Theatre** are likely to support trade at the City Centre's evening time hospitality F&B venues.
291. These venues all have a supporting role in promoting the District's hospitality industry, but in particular for Lichfield City Centre.

HOSPITALITY (FOOD & BEVERAGE) EXPENDITURE FORECASTS

292. An assessment has been undertaken of the broader leisure expenditure potential of Lichfield District's resident population over the study period to 2040, from which we can better understand the contribution of hospitality spend and its importance to Lichfield's economy. The assessment tables on leisure and F&B expenditure are set out in Appendices 6 and 7, Volume 2.
293. In assessing available future leisure expenditure, the base year expenditure per capita levels for leisure identified for Lichfield District have been projected forward to 2040 using Experian's forecast annual growth rates. These forecast annual rates are then applied to the projected population for Lichfield District to identify the total available expenditure on commercial leisure services.
294. The table below shows the most recent leisure expenditure or spend per head projections by Experian Business Strategies (EBS) for 2024 onwards as set out in Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 (RPBN22); published in March 2025.

Table 8: Actual & Forecast Growth in UK Leisure Spend (% per annum)

	2024	2025	2026	2027-31	2032-40
Annual Leisure expenditure growth (%)	-1.60%	0.00%	0.30%	0.60%	0.70%

Source: Retail Planner Briefing Note 22 (March 2025)

295. Leisure expenditure nationally is expected to increase by around 0.63% per annum between 2025 and 2040. This represents an improvement over time, with the period 1997 to 2021 having experienced a decline of -1.5% per annum. This takes account of a sharp drop in 2020 during the height of the COVID19 pandemic and subsequent spike in 2021 as leisure venues reopened. However, it should be noted that these quoted rates of expenditure are for total leisure expenditure. Expenditure for different types of leisure will experience different rates of growth during this period, with varying degrees of spend being made online.
296. Applying the forecast leisure expenditure per capita to the population projections results in an increase in total available commercial leisure expenditure for Lichfield District of +9.5% (+31.1m) to £341.4m by 2035; or by +15.4% (+£50.5m) to £377.9m over the entire study period to 2040.
297. Table 5 in Appendix 6 (Volume 2) disaggregates growth in leisure expenditure by category and the value of spend on F&B spend. It shows that F&B expenditure between 2025 and 2035 in the Study Area is forecast to increase by +£18m; accounting for 58% of the total growth.
298. Within the F&B sector, restaurants, cafes, takeaways, bars and pubs, accounts for 87% of total F&B spend, with the remainder mainly spent on takeaway services (and a nominal amount on catering services).
299. From a planning perspective this clearly shows the potential importance of spending on at drinking and dining out venues for town centres, given much of that spend will, or has the potential to be spent in defined centres at all levels of the retail hierarchy.
300. In contrast to F&B, spend generated by the residents of the District on accommodation services is not likely to be spent within the District, but spend from the considerable number of visitors staying in the District or elsewhere in region whilst visiting the area, will be vital to supporting the hospitality market.
301. As identified previously, the hospitality sector, particularly F&B dominates average household expenditure for the Study Area/Lichfield. Spend on F&B is also forecast to experience the greatest growth (as a proportion of total expenditure over the longer period (i.e. towards the end of the study period). In theory, this expenditure growth should support the potential to enhance the scale, quality and choice of F&B uses across the District area. In reality, though, this growth will be determined by current and future trends in the sector and market demand, as discussed earlier in this section.

LICHFIELD DISTRICT HOSPITALITY REVIEW

302. The hospitality sector in Lichfield District plays a vital role in the local economy, contributing significantly through tourism, events, food and drink, and cultural attractions.
303. The following provides an overview of hospitality F&B and hotel offer in Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre. While the focus of the review is on the two centres a high level overview is provided on facilities elsewhere in the District.

Lichfield City Centre

304. Experian Goad recorded 85 F&B outlets in the City Centre in October 2024, accounting for a fifth of all commercial outlets. Restaurants and cafes dominate provision and as the table below shows, representation for these uses in Lichfield City Centre is higher than the national average for centres in the UK. However, this is to be expected for a centre that supports a visitor market.

Table 9: F&B Provision in Lichfield City Centre

	No. of Outlets	% of Total Centre Outlets	
		Lichfield	UK
Bars & Wine Bars	15	4.35%	2.4%
Cafes	21	6.09%	5.2%
Public Houses	12	3.48%	2.6%
Takeaways/ Fast food	15	4.35%	6.2%
Restaurants	22	6.38%	5.5%
Total	85		

Source: Experian Goad

Note: UK average not available for fast food restaurants

305. Lichfield City Centre has a broad offer ranging from casual/family friendly restaurants to gastropubs and fine dining restaurants, and traditional pubs to themed cocktail bars. Together these venues contribute to a diverse day and evening offer that will appeal to residents and visitors alike.
306. The majority of F&B provision is independent led with notable independent operators including the Thyme Kitchen, Pom's Kitchen & Deli, Brewhouse & Kitchen, Beerbohm, The Duke of York, and Angel Inn. Notably, the City Centre has two Michelin starred restaurants on Bore Street: Upstairs by Tom Shepherd; and The Larder.
307. National brands are represented by Costa, Caffè Nero, Coffee No.1 and Starbucks. While the centre has national brand fast-food restaurants (McDonald's and KFC), it does not support any branded casual dining brands, which are typical for centres of this size (e.g. Pizza Express, Nandos, Zizi, etc). formal sit-down restaurants.

308. In terms of late-night hospitality offer, Lichfield City was awarded the Purple Flag accreditation in September 2024. This status acknowledges excellence in areas such as late-night dining, cultural offerings, safety measures, and visitor well-being from 5 pm to 5 am.
- 308.1. It is noted that Lichfield District Council and M Core have partnered to develop the former Debenhams site in Three Spires Shopping Centre into a four-screen Everyman Cinema, with supporting retail and dining. The development is expected for completion by 2026. This development is likely to stimulate interest from F&B operators to co-locate or seek sites near the Everyman Cinema, and which is also likely to come from casual dining brands.
309. In terms of accommodation services such as hotels, the District's offer is mainly supported by three hotels located within the City Centre, including:
- The George Hotel – a three star hotel and converted coaching inn that is affiliated with the Best Western brand. The hotel is located in the heart of the city centre and can be described as offering quality accommodation at affordable room rates (circa £100 per room per night).
 - St Johns House – a converted Grade II* Regency town house that is a popular restaurant and private hire venue. The recently upgrade hotel offers 12 bedrooms and is aimed at the boutique customer market (room rates from £125 to £200 per night).
 - Premier Inn – a relatively new development and located a short walk from the core retail area. The Premier Inn provides budget hotel accommodation (room rates from £52 per night).
310. In summary, Lichfield City Centre supports a strong independent F&B offer that contributes to the centre's uniqueness and visitor appeal. Conversely, it also indicates the potential to attract new F&B brand subject to market demand, but which is likely to emerge through the planned development of a new Everyman Cinema at Three Spires Shopping Centre.

Burntwood Town Centre

311. Burntwood, including the Chase Terrace area, has a considerably more limited hospitality offer compared to Lichfield City Centre, which is to be expected for a smaller centre with a smaller resident catchment and associated spend potential. The centre's proximity to higher order centres such as Lichfield City Centre, Cannock Town Centre and McArthur Glen, will also be an influential factor on current provision but also future opportunities for investment, which will be limited.
312. However, for its size, Burntwood is relatively well served by F&B outlets, with four restaurants, two cafes, and a fast food chain restaurant (McDonald's) spread across the centre. Takeaway provision includes two branded operators (Papa Johns and Dominos) and typical offer from independents (e.g. fish bar, pizza, etc). The centre also has one public house.

313. As is typical for a small town centre, there are no hotels and the nearest accommodation is located closer to Lichfield City Centre and Cannock Town Centre.

Rest of District

314. Beyond the City Centre, hospitality provision is varied and comprises branded and independent hotels, village pubs and rural gastropubs with rooms.

315. Key hospitality provision for the rest of the District is summarised below:

- Cathedral Hotel, Beacon Street, Lichfield - 3 star hotel north of the defined City Centre boundary.
- Premier Inn Lichfield North East, Fine Lane – budget hotel located north east of the city and off the A38.
- Coppers End Guest House, Muckley Corner - 3 star hotel located near the junction of the A5 and the A461.
- Innkeeper's Collection Lichfield, The Hedgehog, Stafford Road - 3 star hotel located on the western edge of the city.
- Drayton Manor Resort Hotel, Drayton Bassett - a family friendly hotel that sits within the wider Drayton Manor theme park.
- Swinfen Hall, Swinfen – the former 4 star country mansion hotel is currently closed and undergoing renovation.
- The Fazeley Inn – a small 3 star hotel in Fazeley village.
- All of the District's key rural villages are served by a least one pubs/restaurant.
- The District has a number of rural pubs, some with rooms.

316. In summary the current hospitality provision within Lichfield District is well-developed across Lichfield City Centre, offering a mix of restaurants, pubs and bars, quality accommodation, and cultural attractions. This strong core is supported by a calendar of major events and festivals that draw visitors year-round.

317. Across the wider District, including Burntwood and surrounding villages, the offer is more limited but includes a small number of hotels, gastropubs, and rural dining experiences.

318. While quality and diversity are evident, there remains scope to broaden the hospitality offer, particularly hotel accommodation within or close to Lichfield City Centre to encourage more overnight visits. While opportunities for investment in Burntwood's hospital sector will be more limited this should be explored as part of the masterplanning work currently commissioned by the Council's members.

LEISURE FOOD & DRINK SPEND PATTERNS IN LICHFIELD DISTRICT

319. Estimates on F&B expenditure generated by Study Area residents and visitors into Lichfield District is set out in Table 5, Appendix 7 (Volume 2).
320. Using population and expenditure per capita data on F&B (Table 5, Appendix 6, Volume 2) it is estimated that over £189.3m is generated by District residents in 2025. As highlighted earlier, F&B expenditure is forecast to potentially increase by +£18m (+9.5%) over the next ten years to 2035 and by +£29.2m (+15.4%) over the period to 2040.
321. Using Experian Insights transaction data it is possible to identify the most popular destinations for F&B spend, which is based on purchases from branded and independent bakeries, cafes, and restaurants, takeaway outlets, and drinking venues.
322. The market share analysis on F&B based on transactional spend is set out in Table 1 in Appendix 7, Volume 2.
323. The analysis reveals that centres in the District are retaining 35.4% spend on leisure F&B, which is likely to be higher to account for an element of online spend being directed back to local F&B operators. The majority of the spend is to Lichfield and its surroundings (17.4% collectively). The next highest level of retention of a named centre, it is Burntwood and its surroundings, collectively attaining 3.3% of spend.
324. In terms of leakage, almost half (48.8%) of total F&B expenditure is spent at locations outside of the District with venues in Birmingham dominating.
325. It should be noted that the market shares exclude online transactions which will include takeaway/delivery orders from restaurants and takeaways via third party delivery platforms (e.g. Deliveroo, Just Eat, Uber Eats, etc). The market share turnover will be higher to some degree for some are all centres in the District.
326. If online spending is excluded from the market share analysis for F&B then the percentage for retained Study Area expenditure increases from 35.4% to 42%. This assumes that all online transactions are linked to F&B outlets in, but a proportion will be generated by F&B outlets outside of the District area.
327. With the above caveats in mind, the market shares should be treated as indicative, but it can be assumed that retained F&B expenditure for the District will range somewhere between 35.4% to 42%.
328. Forecasts on centre F&B turnover for the District's centres and other locations is based on known transactions made in person and reflecting the market shares set out in the table above.
329. A clearer picture emerges on F&B market share for the District's centres when we take account of F&B expenditure from domestic (UK) residents originating from outside the Study Area.

330. The percentage uplift and corresponding turnover for 2025 and forecast years to 2040 is presented in Tables 2-6 of Appendix 7, Volume 2. The results for 2025 are summarised below

Table 10: F&B Study Area Turnover and Inflow from Outside the Study Area in 2025 (£m)

Location	Total Study Area	Study Area Inflow	Total Expenditure
Lichfield City Centre	£23.8	£22.9	£46.7
Elsewhere Lichfield	£9.0	£5.6	£14.7
Burntwood Town Centre	£2.2	£1.0	£3.2
Elsewhere Burntwood	£4.0	£1.6	£5.6
Lichfield Edge of Centre Food Stores	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Imperial Retail Park	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Other Out of Centre Food Stores	£0.0	£0.0	£0.0
Alrewas	£2.4	£0.9	£3.3
Armitage with Handsacre	£1.0	£0.6	£1.5
Fazeley	£0.7	£2.0	£2.7
Fradley	£0.0	£0.4	£0.4
Little Aston	£0.5	£2.9	£3.4
Shenstone	£5.6	£6.2	£11.8
Whittington	£1.0	£0.7	£1.7
Elsewhere in Study Area	£16.7	£27.1	£43.8
Sub-Total Study Area	£67.0	£71.8	£138.8

331. The analysis of F&B expenditure inflow for the base year and corresponding monetary values for 2025 shows that in monetary terms the highest quantum of inflow in spend terms is to **Lichfield City Centre** and a much lower quantum to the remaining smaller centres in the District. Visitor expenditure or inflow accounts for almost half of the City Centre's turnover.
332. For other centres, contribution or monetary uplift is less pronounced which reflects the more limited F&B function of other locations in the District. The only notable exception relates to Fazeley where the data indicates that 73% of the centre's turnover is generated by visitor inflow. This is explained by the centre's proximity to Drayton Manor Park and the likelihood that day and overnight visitors to the estate may be using F&B facilities at nearby Fazeley, particularly takeaway outlets.
333. Overall, the value of visitor expenditure or inflow to District (£71.8m) is significant and accounts for more than the quantum generated by Study Area residents (£67m). This uplift expenditure will be primarily generated by the City Centre's restaurants, cafes, bars, and pubs, which highlights the important contribution of the sector to supporting the City Centre's economy.

SUMMARY

334. The hospitality and commercial leisure industry faces considerable challenges and pressures. Consumers are becoming increasingly selective in terms of where and how they spend their discretionary leisure spending, but new activities and innovative offers will continue to evolve and attract people. As a result, forecasting need for new leisure uses is more difficult to assess than for retailing. The demand for existing and new leisure uses and facilities is particularly sensitive to changes in economic, demographic, lifestyle and fashion trends and those in the business are often unable to look more than a few months ahead.
335. Any growth to sustain new retail and hospitality will be very much subject to market demand. Focusing new uses in Lichfield and Burntwood will help increase competition and consumer choice, and to underpin both daytime and evening economies.
336. Generally, opportunities to support the repurposing of vacant or under-utilised retail and commercial units should be encouraged across all of District's centres.

9. RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY MARKET DEMAND ANALYSIS

338. This section considers the findings of the retail and leisure needs assessments in Section 7 and 8 and considers whether there is interest from the market based on identified operator requirements.

CONTEXT

339. This assessment has been prepared in the context of the many issues and challenges facing the UK's retail sector and high streets. These challenges have been driven by a combination of economic pressures, technological change (which has driven the growth in online activity and sales) and shifts in consumer behaviour. This has resulted in a significant year-on-year rise in business failures, with the resultant closure of stores and the significant loss of jobs. The pandemic accelerated and compounded these trends, while the current challenging cost of living crisis is expected to slow down retail sales and spend on leisure.
340. As highlighted in Section 3 the retail market is particularly volatile as brands that were at one time considered to be immune to retail shock waves have collapsed; local examples include Wilko and Debenhams. The key message is that there is continuous and significant downward pressure on retail values, at a time when retailers and landlords are facing rising costs and debts. In turn, this has led to many more retail operators being forced into administration and a rise in vacancies (see Section 3). Research indicates that Britain is over-shopped; meaning there is too much retail floorspace in our towns and shopping centres. In turn, these trends are all impacting on the capacity and market demand for new retail floorspace.
341. Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre are not immune from these national and regional trends. The health check assessments show that the two centres are all generally performing well, however, for Lichfield City Centre in particular the centre is vulnerable to competition from out of centre development, higher order centres, and online. For Burntwood, the main challenge is sustaining enough retail and service uses within Burntwood Shopping Centre to meet the needs of the local catchment and better connections with Morrisons and Aldi.
342. The forecast retail capacity assessment summarised in Section 5 considered the need for new retail (convenience and comparison) floorspace in Lichfield District and its two main centres over the ten-year period up to 2035, and to 2040. The capacity forecasts were informed by the latest forecasts published by Experian Business Strategies (Retail Planner Briefing Note 22). Experian's forecasts take account of the impacts arising from recent economic events and likely recovery scenarios on retail expenditure levels over the short, medium, and long term, and the growing market share of non-store retail sales (specifically online purchases).
343. The headline figures show no capacity for new convenience and comparison goods retail floorspace over the ten-year forecast period to 2035 for the District and beyond. However, this will not necessarily mean that there will not be market interest from operators seeking sites in or around the centres.

344. The rest of this section considers known interest from retail and leisure operators, including those within the hospitality sector.

LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE MARKET DEMAND OVERVIEW

345. Lichfield City Centre's retail and leisure market is experiencing a period of transformation and regeneration. The market has been shaped by the closure of major anchor stores, such as Debenhams, but is now benefiting from significant investment in new leisure and entertainment facilities.
346. The Three Spires Shopping Centre remains the primary retail destination in Lichfield City Centre featuring established high street brands including Argos, WHSmith, Sports Direct, Vodafone, Boots, and Mountain Warehouse. The centre sits at the heart of the retail area and provides the City's prime trading location and parking facilities.
347. The most significant development in the retail and leisure sector is the planned transformation of the former Debenhams site. Lichfield District Council and M Core have entered into a joint agreement to develop the site into an Everyman cinema and retail and dining establishments by 2026.
348. Plans are underway to extend a shop previously occupied by Your Co-op Travel in the Three Spires Shopping Centre to improve the look of the building for the new cinema and hospitality complex. This provides an indication of the coordinated efforts to enhance the overall retail environment alongside the leisure development.
349. The table below summaries occupiers who have registered interest in Lichfield since January 2024.

Table 11: Operator Requirements - Lichfield

Recorded Date	Operator	Operator Type	Min sqm	Max sqm
Jul-25	Insomnia Coffee	Leisure Services	140	230
Jun-25	Liv Padel	Leisure Services	1,210	4,050
Jun-25	Loaf	Comparison Retail	460	930
May-25	Lidl	Convenience Retail	1,670	2,460
Apr-25	Cook	Convenience Retail	80	130
Mar-25	KFC	Leisure Services	140	190
Mar-25	Paragon Group	Leisure Services	230	n/a
Mar-25	Cotton Traders	Comparison Retail	140	230
Mar-25	The Extra Care Charitable Trust	Comparison Retail	70	190
Mar-25	Amber Taverns	Leisure Services	190	n/a
Jan-25	Just for Pets	Comparison Retail	230	600
Oct-24	Magical Story	Comparison Retail	190	280
Sep-24	M&S Food	Convenience Retail	560	2,320
Jul-24	Calendar Club	Comparison Retail	70	190
Jun-24	Clifton Trade Bathrooms	Comparison Retail	420	650
Jun-24	Travelodge	Leisure Services	930	3,720
Apr-24	PDSA	Comparison Retail	90	190
Total			6,820	16,780

Source: The Requirement List

350. Whilst a number of the above requirements such as Insomnia Coffee, Cook, Cotton Traders, PDSA, Paragon Group and Callender Club will be seeking town centre locations other requirements including Lidl, M&S Food, Clifton Bathrooms and Just for Pets will be for out-of-centre locations which are more suited to their trading formats.
351. Indeed, it is understood that M&S Food, are looking to open a 2,000 sq m store with associated customer car parking on Baker Way south of the Southern Bypass as part of the St John's Grange residential scheme.
352. There are likely to be requirements from other retailers that for various reasons including commercial confidentiality are not published but the above indicative list demonstrates Lichfield's attractiveness to the market.
353. It should also be noted that the independent retail sector does not typically publish requirements in the same way as the larger retail groups but our agency colleagues report reasonable demand from SME's particularly in the health & beauty, convenience retail and coffee shop sectors.
354. The repurposing of the former Debenhams department store to the rear of the Three Spires Shopping Centre has been pre-let to boutique cinema operator Everyman and with restaurant lettings agreed to Nando's and The Botanist. As part of this development the Council and their partner M-Core have demolished an ageing multistorey car park enhancing the public realm.
355. On completion next year we anticipate the development should provide a significant boost to the towns night time economy potentially attracting further restaurant and leisure operators into the city centre.
356. Restaurant operators are typically attracted to locations where there is good quality public realm and the scope for external eating. Obviously, attractors such as cinema or theatre are also highly beneficial. Expansion within the restaurant sector is largely being driven by Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs) who typically require ground floor units of 100-300 sq m.
357. Overall, the market appears to be adapting to changing consumer preferences by incorporating more experiential elements, with the cinema and dining development representing this trend.
358. Lichfield City Centre's retail and leisure market is in a transitional phase, moving away from traditional department store-led retail towards a more diversified mix of retail, dining, and entertainment offerings. The planned Everyman cinema development by 2026 indicates confidence in the market's future viability and suggests a strategic repositioning towards experiential retail and leisure uses.

BURNTWOOD TOWN CENTRE MARKET DEMAND OVERVIEW

359. Burntwood Town Centre faces typical challenges experienced by many UK market towns, with questions raised about the viability of retail and leisure developments due to changes in shopping habits and competition from other location. The

market has been impacted by broader retail trends affecting high streets across the UK.

360. The town centre comprises several key retail locations:

- Burntwood Town Shopping Centre on Cannock Road
- Various high street shops and services

361. The table below summaries occupiers who have registered interest in Burntwood since January 2024.

Table 12: Operator Requirements - Burntwood

Recorded Date	Operator	Operator Type	Min sqm	Max sqm
May-25	Lidl	Convenience Retail	1,670	2,460
Mar-25	KFC	Leisure Services	140	190
Dec-24	St Giles Hospice	Comparison Retail	50	470
Total			1,860	3,120

Source: The Requirement List

362. Burntwood lacks a traditional town centre with generally poor existing retail provision. Burntwood Town Shopping Centre is ageing and unattractive and lacks a proper anchor store. We understand a potential regeneration of the area is proposed – there maybe potential for a foodstore on the site such as Lidl who have a listed requirement or one of the larger format discount stores such as Home Bargains, The Range and B&M who typically seek units in excess of 2,000 sq m and whose new store acquisitions are generally opportunity led.

363. Alternatively, a new local centre could be anchored by non-retail uses including civic, educational or medical facilities.

364. As shown above there are limited published requirements for the town – and we understand the St Giles Hospice have now secured a unit.

365. McArthurGlen`s Designer Outlet West Midlands at Cannock which is 5 miles to the west of Burntwood is reportedly trading very well and clearly impacts on both the local catchment and the wider region. As such we think Burntwood will only have local retail appeal providing a largely convenience offer.

366. Locally, the Burntwood Town Deal represents a collaborative effort between Burntwood Town Council, Lichfield District Council, and Staffordshire County Council to improve shopping potential, health services and transport infrastructure Burntwood Town Deal - Lichfield District Built Environment, indicating public sector commitment to town centre regeneration.

367. The town maintains monthly markets from April to October at Sankey's Corner High Street Shops in Burntwood, England, providing additional retail opportunities and community engagement.

368. As with Lichfield, Burntwood is also at a transition point and repositioning in line with broader retail trends affecting high streets across the UK.

SUMMARY

369. Lichfield City Centre supports a strong local and visitor catchment to the District. This will support continued investment and market interest from new commercial leisure operators. Demand is more likely to forward from national leisure operators primarily in the City Centre due to its tourist draw and relative concentration of population in the District.
370. The planned repurposing of the former Debenhams department to the rear of the Three Spires Shopping Centre is pre-let to boutique cinema operator Everyman Cinema. It is understood that restaurant lettings are agreed with Nando's, a leading casual dining chain, and The Botanist, a bar/restaurant chain. On completion next year, it is anticipated that the development should provide a significant boost to the towns night time economy and potentially attracting further F&B and leisure operators into the City Centre.
371. For Burntwood, demand from operators will be limited due to the proximity of higher order centres and the limited availability of modern retail floorspace. Opportunities to invest in Burntwood Shopping Centre should be explored which holds the potential to improve commercial town centre offer through its refurbishment or redevelopment.

10. OFFICE MARKET ASSESSMENT

372. This section provides an up-to-date assessment of the availability, requirements and demand for office space within Lichfield and Burntwood and provide a realistic outlook with regard to the future market requirements within the centres and the District as a whole drawing on the findings of the Council's latest Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA)

FINDINGS OF THE LICHFIELD AND TAMWORTH HEDNA (2025)

373. The Lichfield and Tamworth Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) was produced by Icen Projects in March 2025. It provides an assessment of housing and employment land needs and requirements in Lichfield and Tamworth and covers the period from 2022 to 2043.
374. The HEDNA estimates the future need for employment land by type and so provides a specific figure for office land needs. Outputs are provided by use class at local authority level for each District area for Lichfield and Tamworth.

Summary of the HEDNA Findings for Office Needs

375. The HEDNA uses a range of modelling approaches to identify future employment land needs:
- Labour demand linked to the Experian Baseline economic forecast
 - Labour supply approach linked to the standard method housing target
 - Past gross completions trends
 - Past net completions trends
 - Net absorption rates
376. The HEDNA draws upon the Experian 2024 forecast which for Lichfield show a growth in employment of 5,900 jobs over the 2022-43 plan period, this equates to 10% and an average of 295 jobs per annum. The labour demand approach then uses modelling assumptions on typology requirements, employment densities, and plot ratios to estimate the floorspace required to meet the forecast jobs growth.
377. The labour supply approach starts with the housing need figure from the Standard Method and, using assumptions regarding economic activity rates, commuting, and double-jobbing, estimates the implications this would have for Lichfield's workforce. However, the HEDNA concludes that the Labour Supply figures are not considered realistic in terms of employment land need and therefore are not taken forward in recommending an overall land need in Lichfield.
378. There are two scenarios based on a continuation of past growth rates – one based on gross completions and one based on net completions, however for Lichfield these produce very similar results.
379. Finally a scenario based on net absorption rate – that is the net gain when considering move-in and move-outs of office space. However, this scenario produces a very low estimate of future office floorspace demand.

380. The HEDNA identifies the future office needs for Lichfield as ranging between 4.7ha based on the Past Completions Trend Scenarios and 6.2ha based on the Experian Labour Demand Scenario. The HEDNA Concludes that a mid-point of 5.0ha of office land would be a reasonable level of office land to plan for.

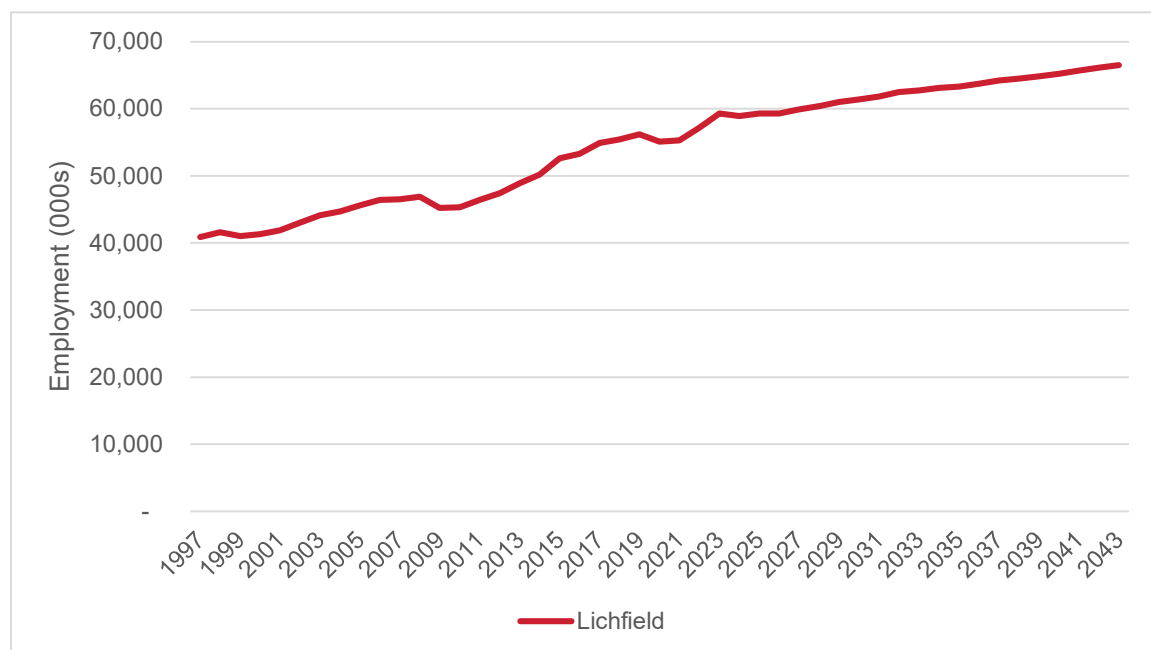
FUTURE OFFICE DEMAND

381. The Lichfield and Tamworth HEDNA (2025) draws on Experian economic growth forecast from 2024. For Lichfield, the 2024 Experian forecast shows a growth in employment of 5,900 jobs over the 2022-43 plan period, this equates to 10% and an average of 295 jobs per annum. This translated to a labour demand scenario office demand of 6.2ha which was the highest of the HEDNA scenarios.
382. This section provides a brief update using the latest Experian forecast from June 2025.

Future Economic Growth Forecast (Experian 2025)

383. The latest Experian forecast from June 2025 is shown in the figure below. This shows a total growth in employment of 9,300 jobs in Lichfield over the period 2022-43. This is equivalent to an annual jobs growth of 440 jobs per annum.
384. This represents an average annual growth rate of 0.7% per annum. By way of comparison this is slightly higher than the forecast growth rate for Staffordshire of 0.5% per annum and the growth rate for the West Midlands of 0.6% per annum.

Figure 31: Total Employment – Lichfield, 1997-2043



Source: Experian 2025

385. The 2025 Experian forecast represents a 58% increase on the Experian 2024 forecast used in the HEDNA. Overall, the latest forecast shows an additional jobs growth of 3,400 above the 2024 version.
386. The table below shows the sectoral growth as shown in the 2025 Experian forecast. Comparison with the sectoral growth shown in the HEDNA (Figure 14.3) suggest the latest forecasts expect considerably higher levels of growth in the Professional Services, Accommodation and Food Services, Education, Public Administration and Defence, Wholesale, Recreation, and Computing and Information Services sectors. Conversely there is a forecast drop in the Real Estate and Other Private Service sectors which wasn't forecast previously.
387. The sectoral breakdown of growth suggests the updated forecasts represent a generally more favourable economic outlook for Lichfield's economy as a whole, rather than by being driven by significant additional growth in one or two key sectors.
388. The sectoral breakdown also identifies that a number of the sectors forecasts significantly more growth (and the two indicating significantly less) are those which generally have a significant office requirement.

Table 13: Experian – Employment Growth 2022-43

Employment Type	Lichfield
Professional Services	2,500
Accommodation & Food Services	1,400
Administrative & Supportive Services	1,100
Health	900
Land Transport, Storage & Post	900
Education	700
Specialised Construction Activities	600
Public Administration & Defence	400
Wholesale	400
Construction of Buildings	300
Recreation	300
Residential Care & Social Work	300
Computing & Information Services	200
Finance	200
Utilities	200
Civil Engineering	100
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	0
Air & Water Transport	0
Chemicals (manufacture of)	0

Employment Type	Lichfield
Computer & Electronic Products (manufacture of)	0
Extraction & Mining	0
Fuel Refining	0
Insurance & Pensions	0
Media Activities	0
Other Manufacturing	0
Pharmaceuticals (manufacture of)	0
Printing and Recorded Media (manufacture of)	0
Retail	0
Telecoms	0
Textiles & Clothing (manufacture of)	0
Wood & Paper (manufacture of)	0
Metal Products (manufacture of)	-100
Real Estate	-100
Transport Equipment (manufacture of)	-100
Food, Drink & Tobacco (manufacture of)	-200
Machinery & Equipment (manufacture of)	-200
Non-Metallic Products (manufacture of)	-200
Other Private Services	-300
Total	9,300

Source: Experian 2025

389. We have not modelled the implications the new Experian forecast will have on office needs in Lichfield, as this was undertaken recently in the HEDNA. However, the 2025 forecast shows a considerably higher forecast jobs growth than the 2024 issue – both in terms of overall number and for a number of key office-based sectors.
390. This suggests that the future demand for office space in Lichfield is more positive than previously forecast and the Council may wish to plan for the higher end of the range of need identified in the HEDNA.

COMMERCIAL MARKET ASSESSMENT

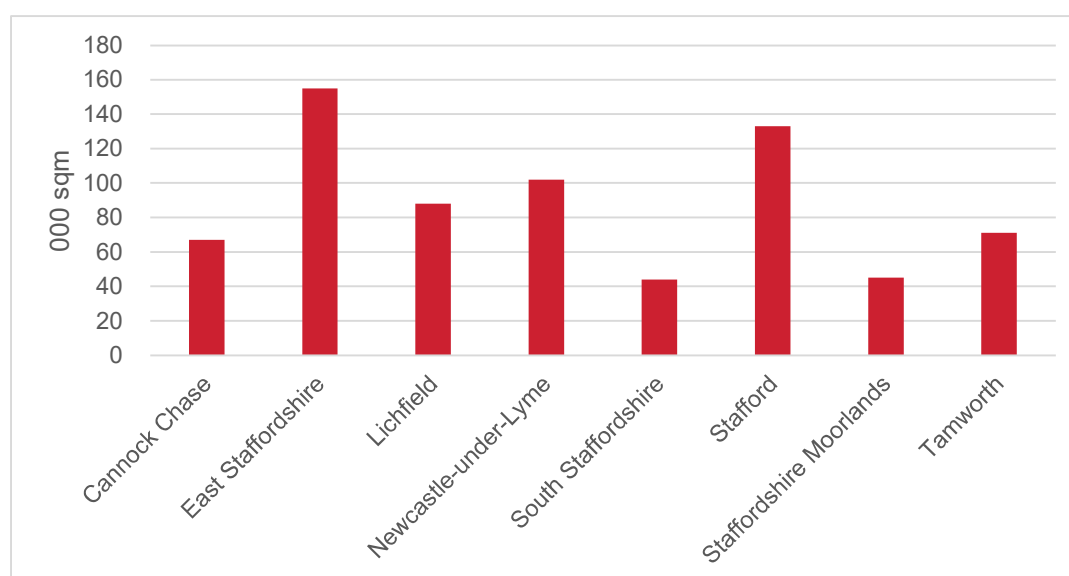
391. This section considers the market for office premises in Lichfield through analysis of stock, availability and demand. Comparisons are made with wider areas – the other Districts of Staffordshire and trends across Staffordshire and the West

Midlands. It also provides a more detailed sub-district analysis of office market trends in Lichfield City, defined as the MSOAs Lichfield 004, Lichfield 005, and Lichfield 007 and Burntwood, defined as the MSOAs Lichfield 006, Lichfield 009, and Lichfield 010, and the rest of the District.

392. In preparing this section LSH has relied upon various data sources. The Non-Domestic Rating Business Stock and Floorspace statistics are used to compare the overall stock of employment premises at local authority level. This high-level data, derived from Valuation Office Agency (VOA) data as of March 2023, uses 'bulk' use classes and figures are rounded. Whilst appropriate for comparing the stock at local authority level, we have used a finer grained analysis of the stock of premises within the District using data from CoStar (national commercial property databases) and site inspection and research by LSH have been used to supplement this data. This more detailed analysis provides a snapshot of the market in Lichfield as at July 2025.

The Office Market in Staffordshire

Figure 32: Office Stock and Floorspace in Staffordshire



Source: VOA 2023

393. Over the last decade, Lichfield District has seen an overall net reduction in its office space falling slightly from 90,000 sqm in 2013 to 88,000 sqm by 2023. This represents an annual average loss of 0.2% of stock. Lichfield is one of only two Districts in Staffordshire to have seen a loss of floorspace over this period along with Stafford. However, across the West Midlands region more widely there has been a loss of office floorspace at a rate of 0.6% per annum.

Table 14: Office Floorspace Change, Staffordshire Authorities 2013-2023

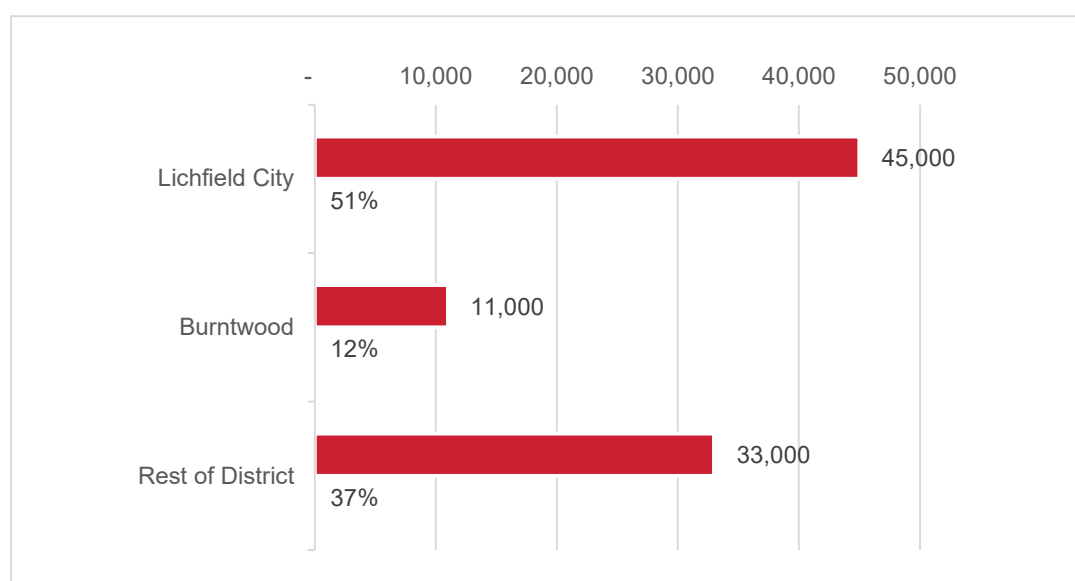
Location	Growth (sqm)	Annual Growth Rate
Cannock Chase	0	0.0%
East Staffordshire	10,000	0.7%
Lichfield	-2,000	-0.2%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	4,000	0.4%
South Staffordshire	1,000	0.2%
Stafford	-10,000	-0.7%
Staffordshire Moorlands	1,000	0.2%
Tamworth	6,000	0.9%
Staffordshire	9,000	0.1%
West Midlands	-370,000	-0.6%

Source: VOA 2023

The Office Market in Lichfield

394. The VOA office floorspace data shows a total office stock across Lichfield District totalling 88,000 sqm. The figure below shows the distribution of office floorspace across the District by location. There is 45,000 sqm of office floorspace located within Lichfield City, this represents just over half (51%) of the District's office space. There is 11,000 sqm of office space located within Burntwood, representing 12% of the District's total. The remaining 33,000 sqm (37%) is spread across the rest of the District with the greatest concentrations in Fazeley and Hilliard's Cross.

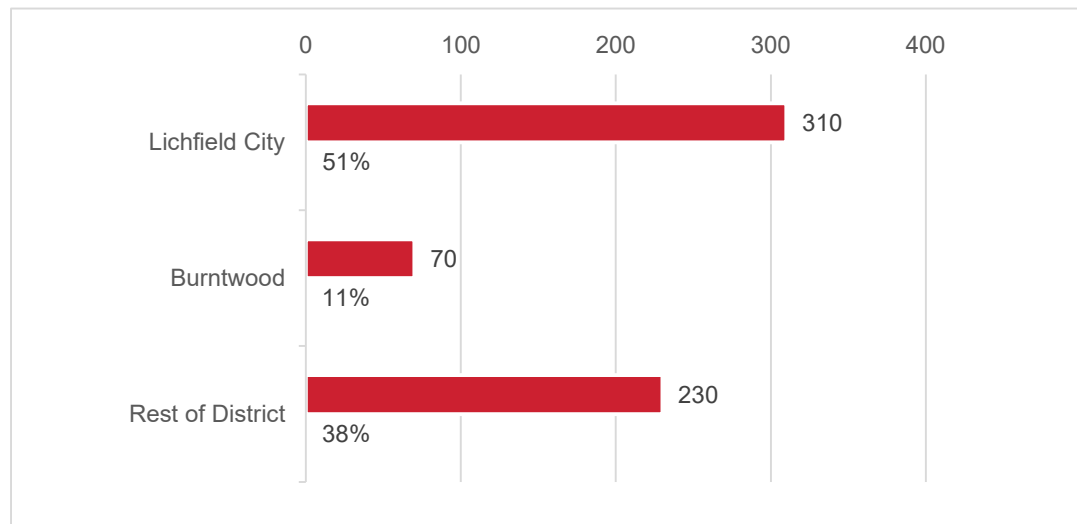
Figure 33: Office Floorspace in Lichfield (sqm)



Source: VOA 2023

395. The figure below shows the office stock breakdown by unit count. This shows a total of 610 units. The distribution of units is virtually identical to the distribution of floorspace – 51% in Lichfield City, 11% in Burntwood, and 38% in the rest of the District – indicating a broadly similar size profile across all areas.

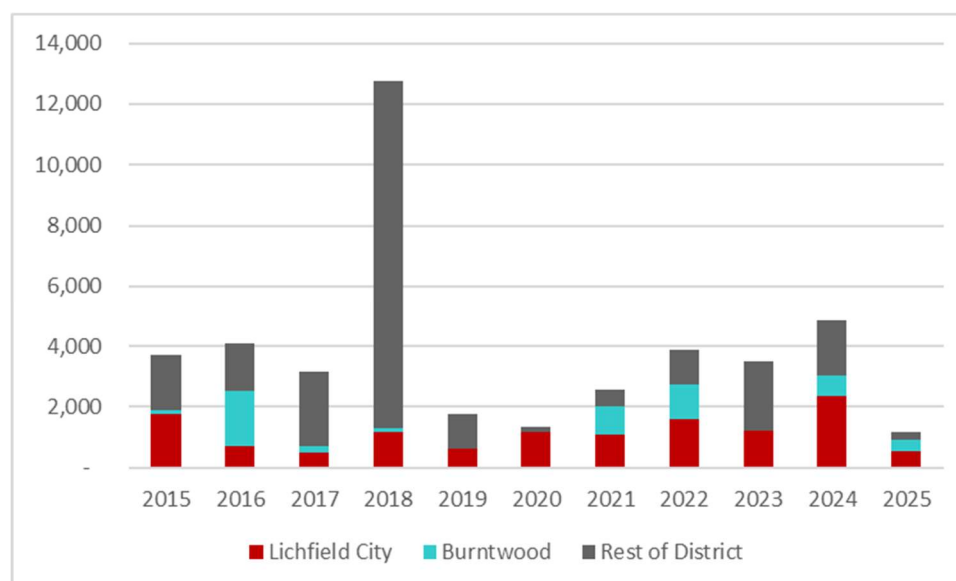
Figure 34: Office Floorspace in Lichfield (Units)



Source: VOA 2023

396. The figure below shows the take-up of office space by year since 2025. The figures for 2025 are for the first half year only. The average annual take-up across the District has been 4,080 sqm per annum. However the data shows a clear spike in 2018 half of which is due to a single large deal – 6,650 sqm taken by Fosroc UK at Fazely on the edge of Tamworth. If we are to treat this deal as an outlier, the average for the District is 3,290 sqm per annum.
397. Average annual take-up in Lichfield City has been just over 1,200 sqm per annum, this represents 30% of the District's total take-up. Within the City Centre, take-up has averaged 385 sqm per annum. This means around a third of office take-up (32%) in the City has been located within the City Centre. This represents 9% of the District's total take-up. Beyond the City Centre there are smaller office locations near Lichfield City Railway Station around Upper St John Street, and near Lichfield Trent Valley Railway Station around Crossfield Road and Britannia Way.
398. In Burntwood, average annual take-up has been 515 sqm per annum, representing 13% of the District total. The vast majority of take-up in Burntwood is located on Attwood Road and Cobbett Road to the west of the town which provide larger out of town office park accommodation.
399. Take-up across the rest of the District averages 2,350 sqm per annum, representing 58%. The areas with the greatest activity is this area are Fazeley and Hilliard's Cross.

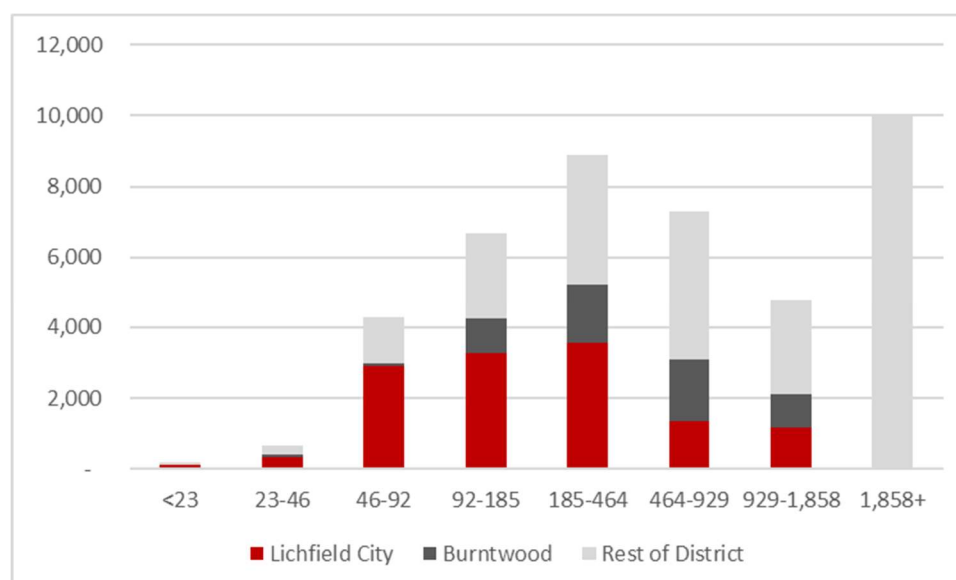
Figure 35: Office Take-Up by Year (sqm)



Source: CoStar

400. The figure below shows the office take-up by size band in sqm. This shows that the 185-464 sqm (2,000-5,000 sqft) band is most popular. Smaller size bands – up to 185 sqm (2,000 sqft) – are more popular in the urban locations, while the larger size bands – 464 sqm (5,000 sqft) and above – there has been more activity in Out of Centre locations, representing a smaller number of deals taking large floorplates in edge/out of town locations.

Figure 36: Office Take-Up by Size Band (sqm)



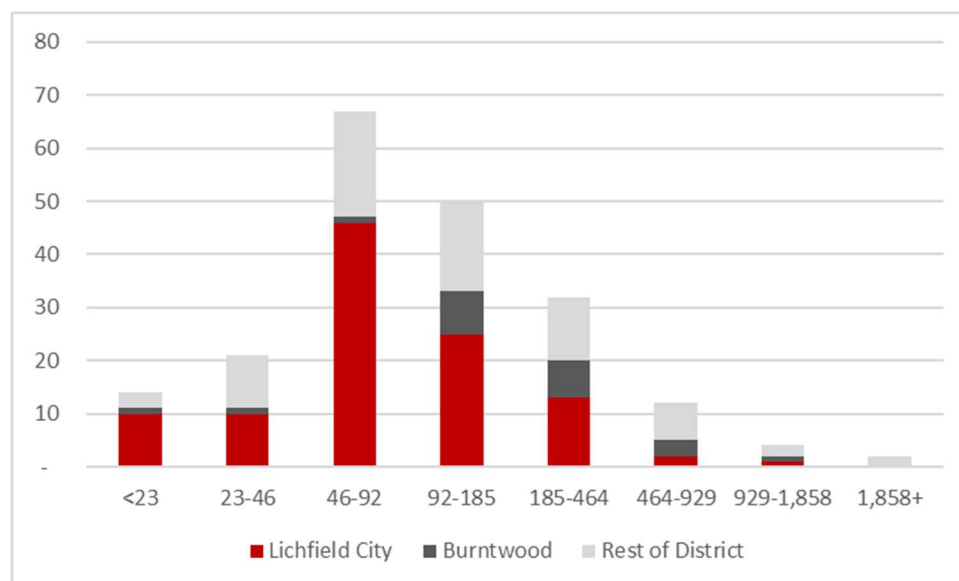
Source: CoStar

401. The figure below shows the data take-up data organized by unit count rather than floorspace (sqm). This shows that the most common unit taken up is the 46-92 sqm (500-1,000 sqft) range. This is particularly common in Lichfield City. Lichfield

City has also seen the majority of take-up of units smaller than 46 sqm, reflecting the stock in the city which comprises a more diverse range of small units than anywhere else in the District.

402. Whereas take-up in Burntwood has generally been concentrated at the slightly larger size - the majority of take-up has been at Attwood Road where units range between 92-278 sqm (1,000-3,000 sqft).

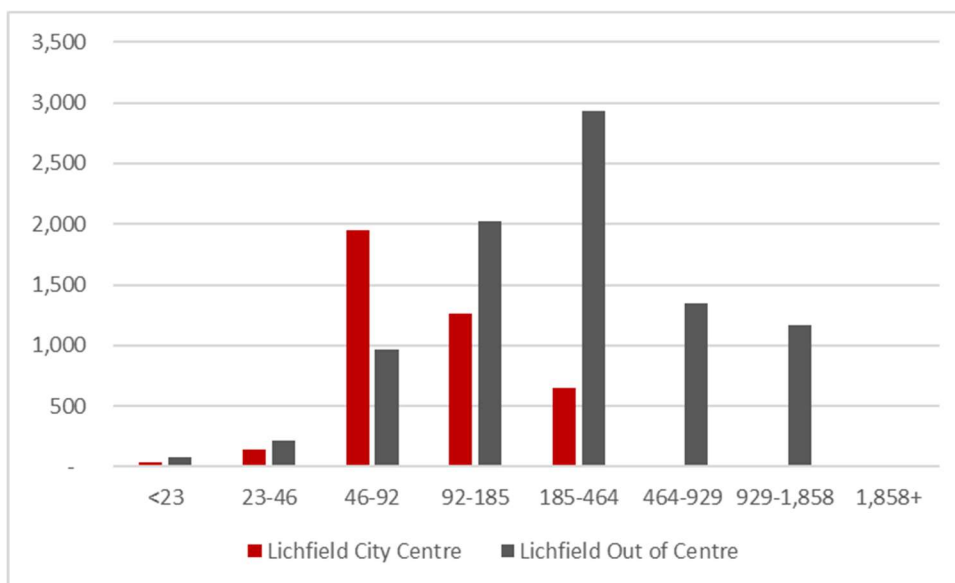
Figure 37: Office Take-Up by Size Band (Units)



Source: CoStar

403. The figure below shows the floorspace take-up analysis broken down in further detail for Lichfield City comparing take-up within the City Centre and take-up elsewhere in the City. In terms of floorspace (sqft), 32% of the City's take-up was located in the City Centre. However, there is a clear City Centre skew towards smaller premises with twice as much take-up of units in the 46-92 sqm (500-1,000 sqft) band in the City Centre as outside, and similar levels in the smaller bands (<23 sqm and 23-46 sqm) (<250 sqft and 250-500 sqft). Conversely, the vast majority of take-up over 185 sqm (2,000 sqft) was Out of Centre, and all of take-up over 464 sqm (5,000 sqft) was Out of Centre.

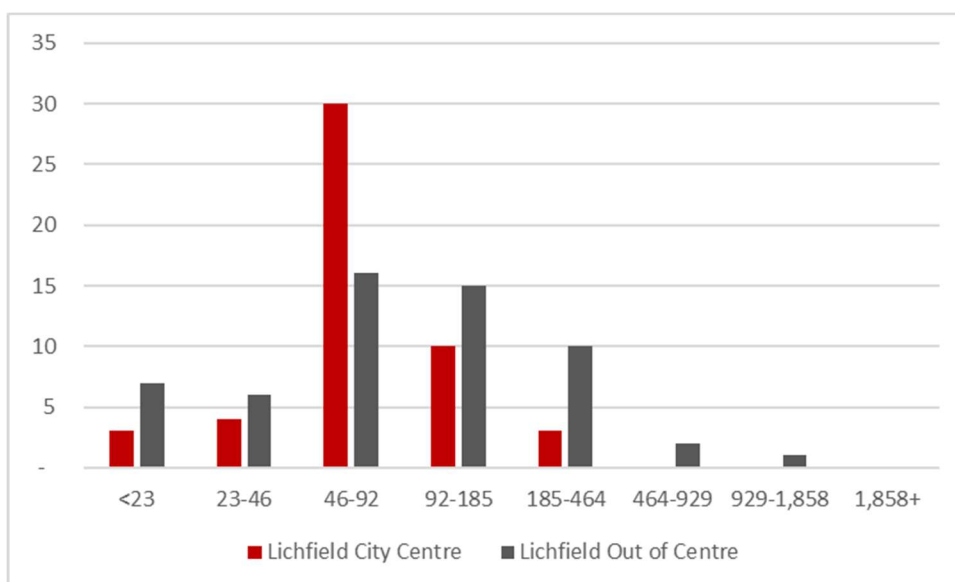
Figure 38: Office Take-Up in Lichfield City Centre vs Out of Centre (sqm)



Source: CoStar

404. The figure below shows the take-up detail for Lichfield City Centre and elsewhere in the City, but instead shows the count of deals. This again highlights the higher representation of deals in the smaller size bands, particularly the 46-92 sqm (500-1,000 sqft) band, in the City Centre.

Figure 39: Office Take-Up in Lichfield City Centre vs Out of Centre (Units)



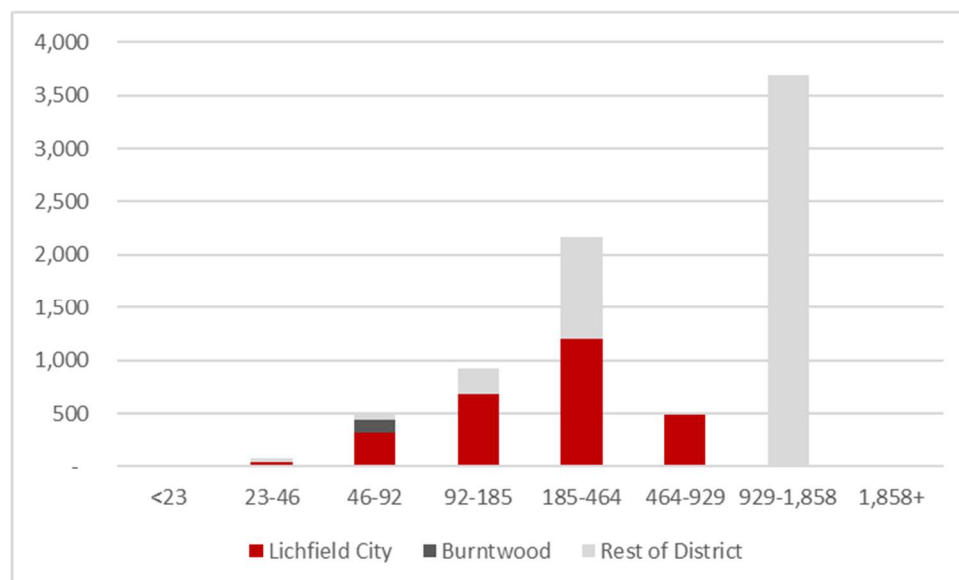
Source: CoStar

Availability

405. The figure below shows current office availability in Lichfield District (as of July 2025). At a District-wide level there is 7,840 sqm of office space across 28 different units currently being advertised as available on CoStar.

406. The offices are differentiated by type between 'retail office' typically high street offices providing financial and professional services, and all other offices. Retail offices account for 5 (18%) of current availability, while all other offices account for 23 (82%) of availability. The majority of available retail offices are located on Market Street, Lichfield City.
407. Site visits were carried out to the units available in Lichfield City Centre, none were identified in Burntwood Town Centre. Of those units available, the quality of provision was mixed with only a small number of units available in modern office blocks. All available premises were in good locations and close to local amenities and close to other local businesses. In particular for the smaller units, these were parts of premises in multiple uses; for example food or retail on the ground floor, with available office space at the uppermost levels, or small space within premises solely for office use. Two of the units identified through the desk top assessment at the end of July were under offer when the site visits were carried out in August. Given size and quality of the premises available it is likely they would suit local businesses seeking small office space.
408. The figure below shows the size and location of availability in terms of total floorspace (sqm). In Lichfield City there is 2,740 sqm currently available constituting 35% of the District total. The majority of available space is spread across the 92-185 sqm (1,000-2,000 sqft) and 185-464 sqm (2,000-5,000 sqft) size bands. This size distribution broadly corresponds to the take-up distribution for the city set out above. Office availability in Burntwood is extremely limited with only two units currently being advertised, both around 56 sqm.

Figure 40: Office Availability by Size and Location (sqm)



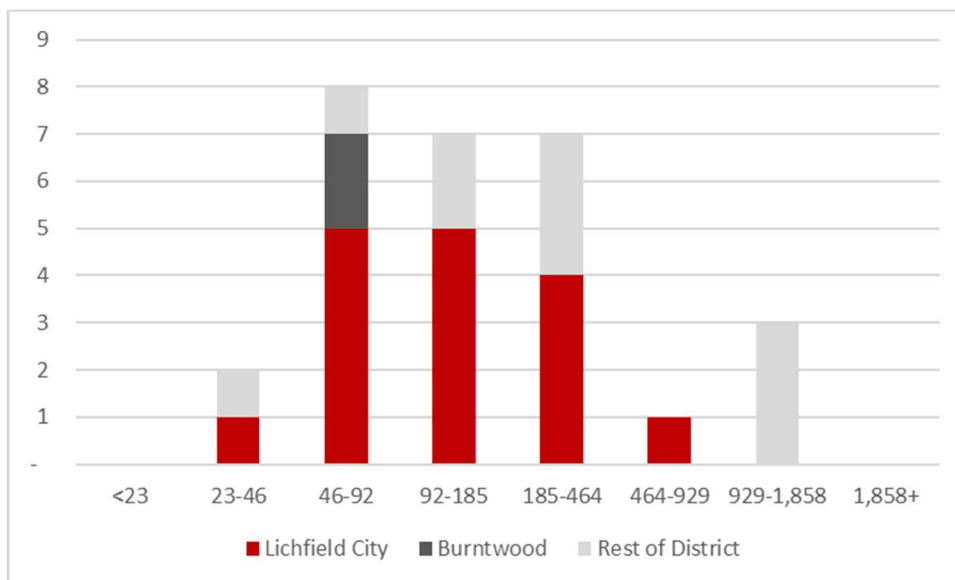
Source: CoStar

409. The figure below shows the same office availability data organized by number of units. This shows a lack of current availability at the smaller end of the market – there are no units smaller than 23 sqm currently being advertised and only 2

smaller than 46 sqm. Similarly there is a lack of larger units, however demand for these has typically been at out of town locations.

410. It also demonstrates the lack of availability of units of all sizes in Burntwood, but particularly of note is the 92-185 sqm (1,000-2,000 sqft) and 185-464 sqm (2,000-5,000 sqft) ranges which saw the majority of take-up in the town in recent years.

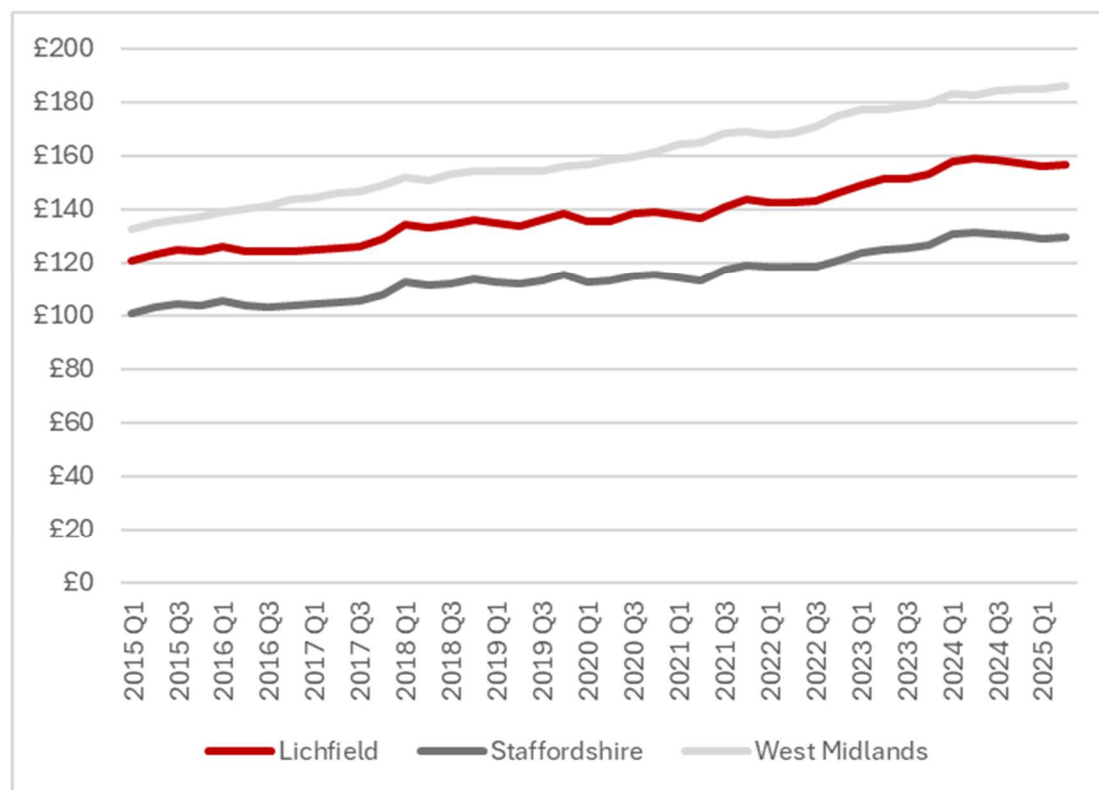
Figure 41: Office Availability by Size and Location (Units)



Source: CoStar

411. Asking market rents in Lichfield District are around £156 psm (£14.50 psf) as of 2025 Q2. This has stayed around the same level for the past year but before this saw increases year on year since 2020. Asking rents in Lichfield are tracking higher than the Staffordshire average which, as of Q2 2025, are around £129 psm (£12 psf). However, prices in Lichfield are lower than the West Midlands average which has reached around £183 psm (£17.00 psf), but which includes premier office locations such as Birmingham City Centre. Both the Staffordshire and West Midlands have seen rents rising at a similar rate to Lichfield.

Figure 42: Office Market Rents (£ per sqm)



Source: CoStar

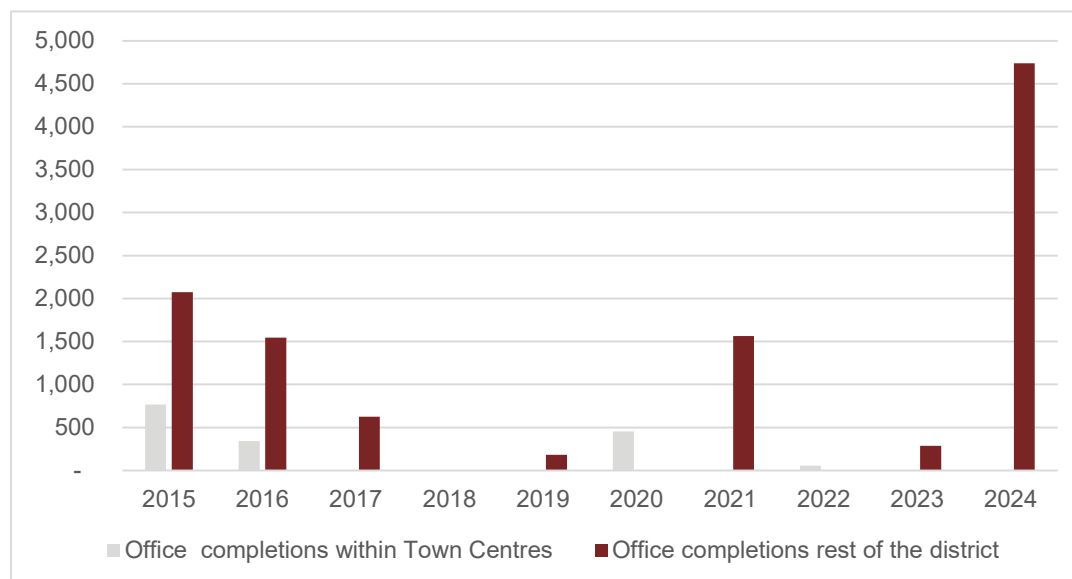
TRENDS OF OFFICE COMPLETIONS AND LOSSES

412. This section considers a range of completions and losses data based on Lichfield District Council's annual monitoring data.

Office Completions

413. The figure below shows office completions in Lichfield District each year since 2015. It separates completions in town centres and completions in the rest of the District. Across the District, there has been an average of 1,260 sqm of office space completed each year during this period. On average 160 sqm (13%) was delivered in town centre locations, with 1,100 sqm (87%) delivered elsewhere in the District each year.
414. 2024 saw the largest quantum of delivery of the past decade. This was split across a number of developments but particularly influenced by 3,621 sqm delivered at Defence Medical Services, Whittington Heath, on the A51.

Figure 43: Office Completions, Lichfield District (sqm)

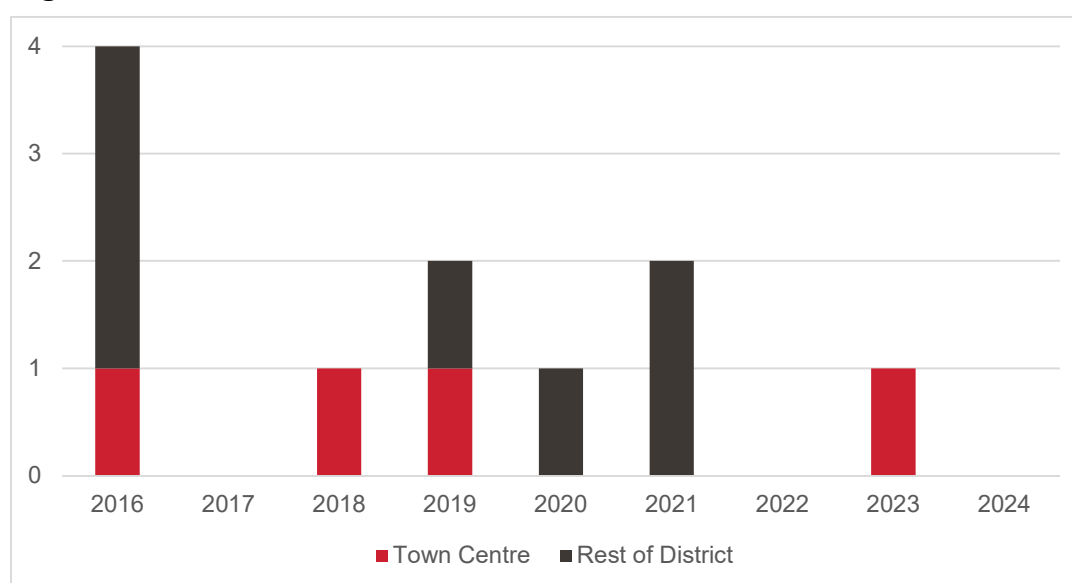


Source: Lichfield District Council

Losses of Office Floorspace to Other Uses

415. The Council record employment losses data but since 2015 half the years have no data recorded. For the recorded years there has been an average annual losses of 288 sqm per annum across the District. This data is not recorded at sub-district level.
416. The figure below shows the number of prior notification applications for the change of use of offices into residential uses in the District since 2016. This shows a total of 11 such applications. Only 4 (21%) have been for sites within town centre locations, while 7 have been other locations.

Figure 44: Office Losses via Prior Notifications, Lichfield District



Source: Lichfield District Council

417. Using details of the number of residential units to be created we have estimated the quantum of office floorspace to be lost via prior notification developments (should they all be implemented). This suggests that around 33 sqm of office space can be expected to be lost in town centre locations per annum, while around 129 sqm of office space can be expected to be lost elsewhere.

CHANGES IN PATTERNS OF HOME WORKING

418. Homeworking has steadily been rising for the past few decades, although this trend has accelerated and risen to prominence since the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequential lockdowns. This has resulted in considerably reduced staff attendance levels for office occupiers – i.e. the number of days each week staff attend the office. This in turn has resulted in some office occupiers requiring smaller premises and scaling back their floorspace requirements on existing lets or when seeking new space.

Changes in Home Working Since the Covid-19 Pandemic

419. The latest data from ONS shows working practices nationally for the period September 2022 to January 2023. This shows that for all workers, just over half (56%) travel to work only (i.e. and didn't work from home) in the previous week; 16% worked from home only; and 28% did some form of hybrid working . The proportion of home working is double for self-employed workers.
420. Corresponding ONS data for pre-Pandemic shows that 6% of workers worked mainly from home in 2019 and that this had been increasing very slowly up from 5% in 2012. This highlights the considerable jump in the prevalence in home working and hybrid working due to the Pandemic and highlight how the prevalence of home working has changed since the Pandemic.

Table 15: Location of work by employment status, National

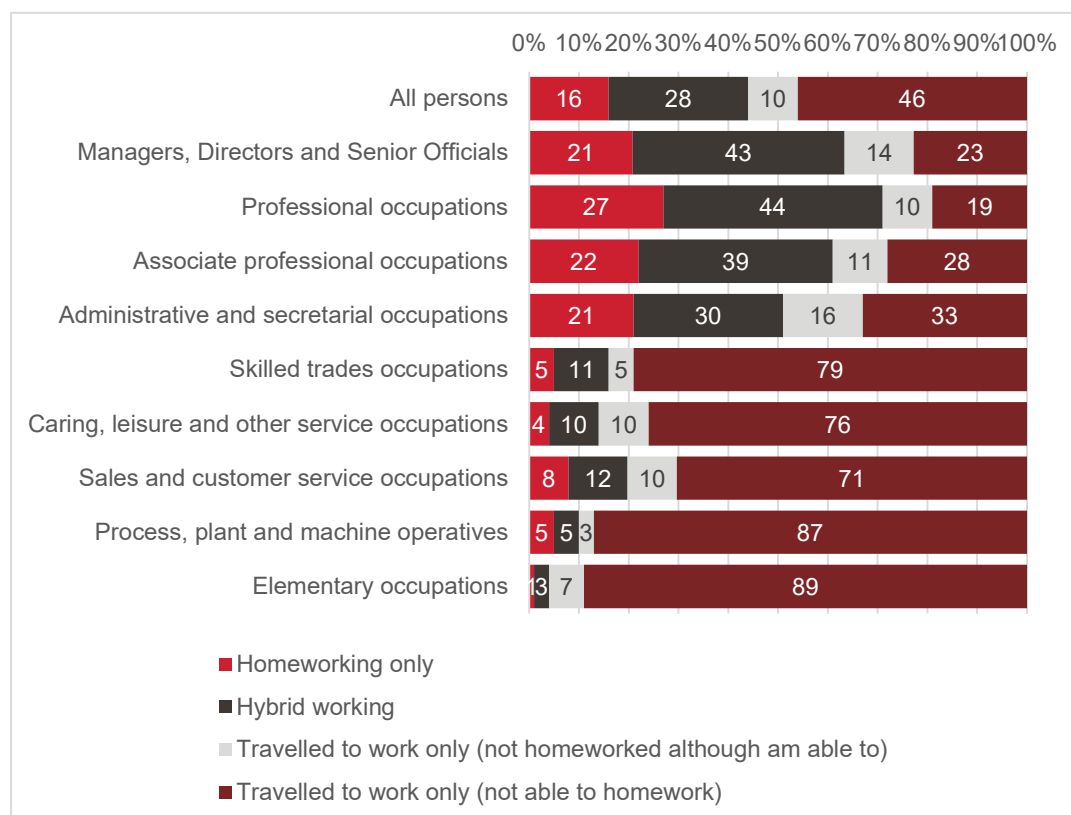
	All persons	Employed	Self-employed	Other
Home working only	16%	14%	32%	20%
Hybrid working	28%	28%	25%	9%
Travelled to work only	56%	57%	43%	71%

Source: ONS, 2023

421. The levels of homeworking differ greatly across sector and occupation, shown in the figure below. This shows a stark contrast between occupation groups 1-4 - where the average rate of home or hybrid working is 62% - and groups 5-9 - where the average rate of home or hybrid working is 13%.
422. The data also breaks down those who travel to their place of work only (i.e. never work from home) into two categories – those who are not able to work from home, and those who are able to but chose not to. The data clearly shows that the majority of those who do not work from home are unable to. Across all

occupations, 82% of those who always travel to a place of work cannot work from home.

Figure 45: Location of Work by Occupation, National



Source: ONS, 2023

423. The ONS data shows that the overall levels of homeworking only have increased slightly on pre-Pandemic levels. However, the biggest increase has been the proportions of hybrid workers. However, this is a nebulous term covering a wider range of working patterns ranging from travelling in to work one day per week, to working from home one day per week.
424. The balance of hybrid working is still something many businesses are exploring and working practices and corporate responses and policies have been constantly changing since the Pandemic. These factors will have a considerable impact in determining future floorspace requirements. LSH have recently undertaken an occupier survey to assess current business practices across a range of office-based industries.

LSH Occupier Survey

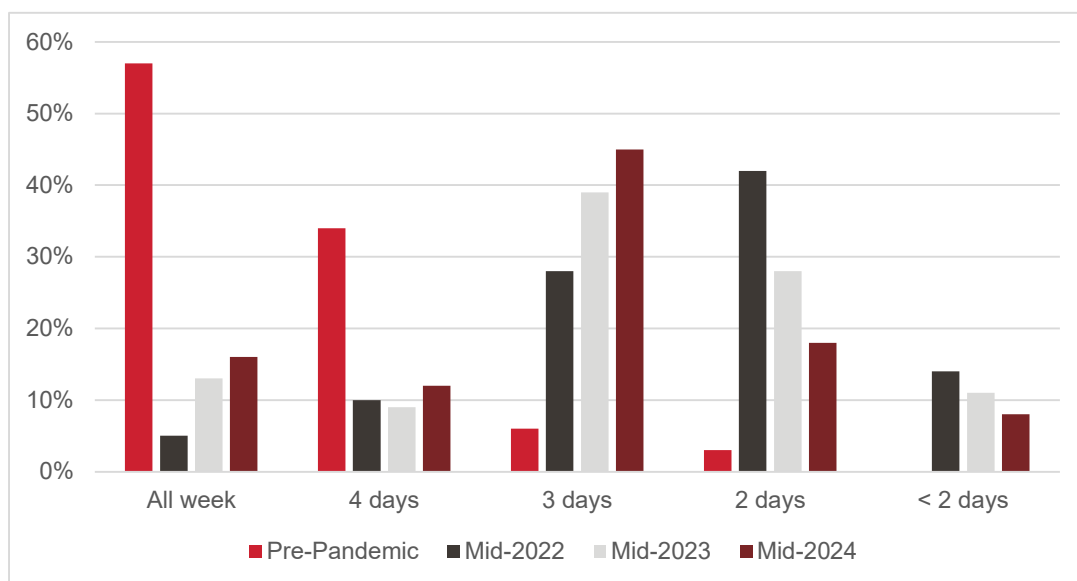
425. LSH's May 2024 annual office occupier survey provides a snapshot of attendance levels, attitudes to hybrid working and the ongoing impact of shifting work patterns on companies' space requirements. This year's survey builds on a similar exercise performed last year to assess how much has changed since the final removal of Covid restrictions.

426. The survey received responses from key occupier clients of LSH representing businesses with a total of more than 100,000 UK staff. Organisations included in the survey range from small companies with fewer than 50 staff to global corporate occupiers with thousands of employees spread across multiple sites nationwide.
427. A wide range of sectors are represented in the survey, including professional services, TMT, banking & insurance and the public sector. The biggest single occupier group was professional services, which accounted for 37% of the responses.
428. Results of the occupier survey are summarised below.

Survey Findings

429. The survey results show a tangible increase in office attendance over the years since the Covid Pandemic. When asked to estimate the average number of days per week that staff in their organisations spent in the office, the most common response was three days a week (45%), reflecting an improvement on the figures from 2023 and 2022.
430. The proportion of 4 and 5-day attendance has dropped since pre-Pandemic levels (91%) to 28% in 2024. Although this represents a slight increase on 2022 and 2023 levels. Attendance levels of two or fewer days a week have declined, but still remain the norm in over a quarter (26%) of respondents' organisations.
431. While the general direction of office attendance is upwards, hybrid working patterns appear to be entrenched. Two or three office days a week is the norm for the majority of survey respondents; and even if attendance does improve further in the future, a full return to pre-pandemic levels appears highly unlikely.

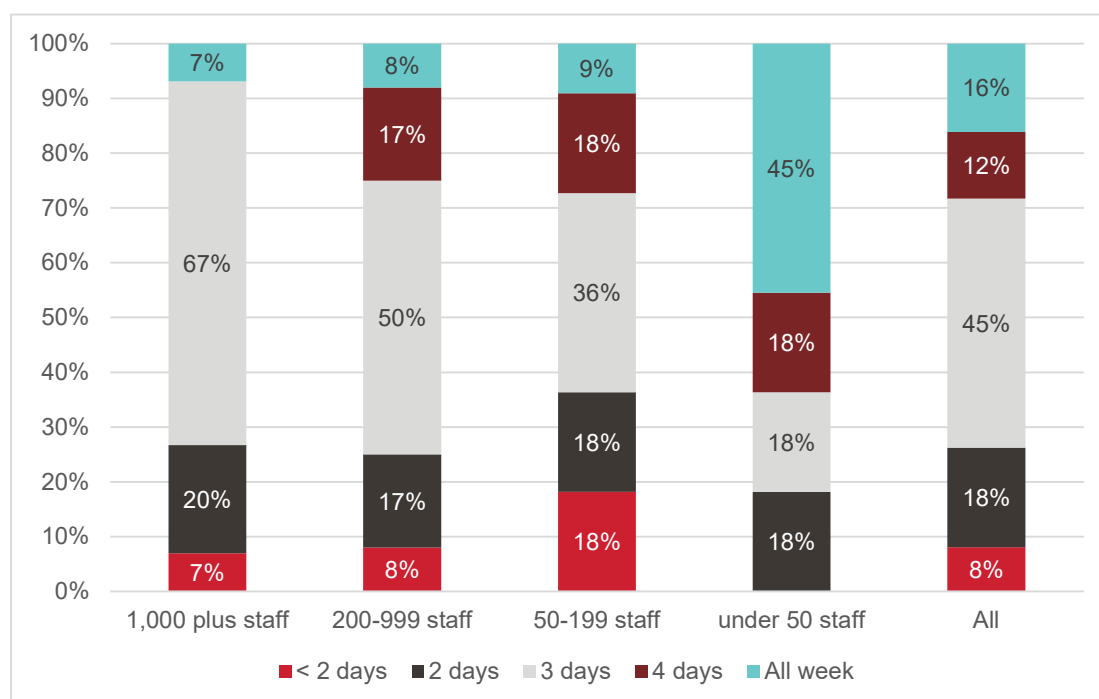
Figure 46: Average days per week that full-time employees spend in the office



Source: LSH Occupier Survey, 2024

432. One of the clearest trends found by the survey is a divergence between attendance levels in firms of differing size. There is a clear trend of greater attendance levels for smaller companies. For companies with fewer than 50 employees, 45% reported full attendance while 63% reported office attendance of at least four days a week. This contrasts with larger businesses, where attendance levels of four days a week or more are still a rarity – only 7% of companies with 1,000+ staff attended 4 or more days a week.
433. For larger firms hybrid working is far more prevalent – 93% of workers at companies with 1,000+ staff work 3 or fewer days. For companies under 50 staff this figure is 36%.
434. This reflects fundamental differences between the needs of smaller and larger firms, with offices seen as essential to the day-to-day operations of many small businesses. Larger companies are more likely to have office space and infrastructure that supports hybrid working, while also employing staff who live across wider geographic areas and benefit from not having to commute daily.

Figure 47: Average weekly attendance levels by company size



Source: LSH Occupier Survey, 2024

435. Lichfield has extremely few medium and large office-based employers. The table below shows the business counts for businesses in Lichfield in the Professional and Business Services sector – which is a predominantly office-based sector. This shows that in Lichfield 99% of businesses within this sector are small (under 50 employees) or micro (under 10 employees). This suggests that the average weekly office attendance in Lichfield is likely to be above average.

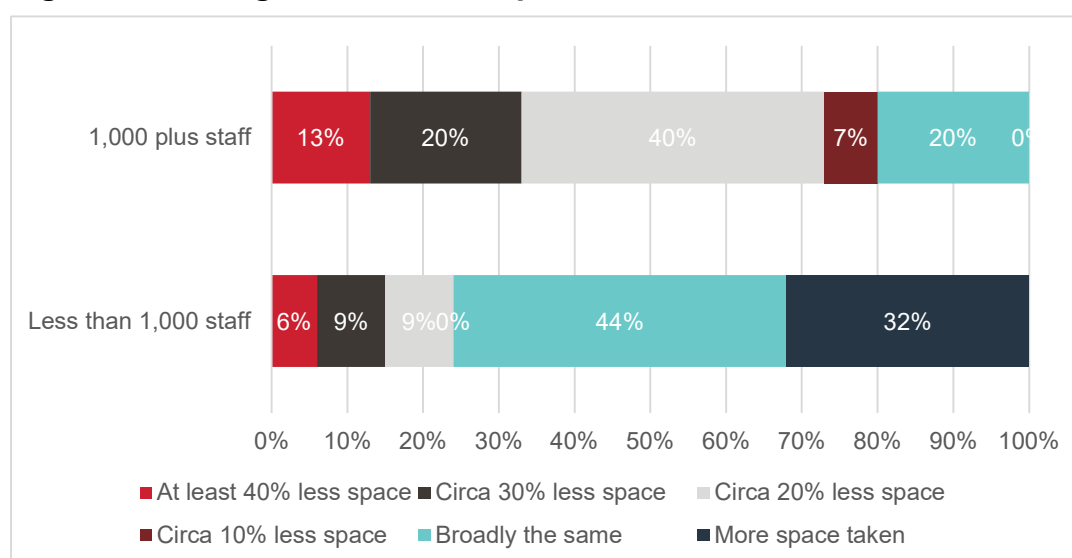
Table 10: Size of Professional and Business Services Businesses by Employees

	Lichfield City	Burntwood	Rest of District
Micro (0 to 9)	91%	94%	94%
Small (10 to 49)	7%	6%	6%
Medium-sized (50 to 249)	1%	0%	1%
Large (250+)	1%	0%	0%

Source: UK Business Counts 2024

436. Hybrid working is continuing to impact both the quantity and quality of companies' space requirements, while sharp rises in energy costs and ESG considerations have also added to some firms' motivations to move.
437. Less than half of those surveyed (41%) said that their organisations had reduced their occupation of office space compared with five years ago, while 37% said that their volume of space was broadly unchanged. In contrast, 22% said that they had taken more space to accommodate increased headcounts, with nearly all of these being at firms with fewer than 200 employees.
438. However, the occupation trends of the largest companies in the survey differ greatly from all other organisations. While 76% of those in the sub-1,000 staff size-bands reported that they now occupied either the same or more space compared with five years ago, 80% in the 1,000-plus employees category said that their space had reduced.

Figure 48: Change in Office Occupation Over Last Five Years



Source: LSH Occupier Survey, 2024

439. Taken together, this evidence suggests that an overall reduction in space requirements of 10-20% due to home working. If this were repeated nationwide, it

would necessitate a contraction in the size of UK office markets, but on a scale that could be achieved relatively organically via the gradual loss of poorer quality buildings from the office stock.

- 440. However, the evidence suggests this is likely to be less of a factor for smaller businesses as the opportunity to improve efficiencies due to more efficient space utilization become more limited at the smaller scale.
- 441. Finding an optimal balance between the cost, quality and size of offices will be an ongoing challenge for occupiers as hybrid working practices continue to evolve. The exchange of quantity for quality is likely to continue, allowing many to upgrade to better space at a lower cost, or at least a cost neutral position, compared with their current workspace.

REVIEW OF CURRENT OFFICE SUPPLY

- 442. The supply of land available for office space in both Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre is limited. The extant Local Plan Allocations: allocates no land in Burntwood Town Centre for office space, and only a single mixed use allocation is identified in Lichfield City Centre. A desktop assessment, followed by a site visit was carried out in August 2025.
- 443. Local Plan Policy LC2 identifies mixed-use sites in Lichfield City, of which L26: Land at Birmingham Road is considered to be potentially suitable for office space. The site includes some existing commercial properties, the existing bus station, multi-storey car parking areas and existing office space. In total the site covers 3.1ha, of which policy anticipates 95 residential dwellings could come forward and in addition to this retail space, Policy Lichfield 3 of the Local Plan: Strategy, would support additional office space of up to 30,000 sqm gross. As there are no other locations in Lichfield City to accommodate this level of new office space, this would be the only allocated site to deliver all or some of this office floorspace.
- 444. Following the desktop assessment and site visit, no planning applications containing new office space have been submitted to the Council, nor have any which would result in losses of the existing provision. Part of the L26 allocation is covered by an extant permission, which has commenced with the demolition of existing multi-storey car park and existing retail space. Therefore, there has been no activity on the site regarding new office space. Given the allocation's location and size and current development activity on part of the site it would appear to still be available, suitable and achievable for office development. However, given the current levels of take up for Lichfield City of around 300 sqm per annum, and the prevailing size of those units at under 50 sqm, together with most larger units coming forward outside of the city centre, there is uncertainty as to how much new office space would be provided here, notwithstanding taking into account the existing office space (which occupied by the District Council) and whether it is partly or replaced in full.
- 445. Following the site visit and inspections around Lichfield City Centre, no other potential areas of land were identified which could accommodate the quantum of office space identified in policy.

CONCLUSIONS

446. Lichfield District comprises a relatively modest office market. Within Lichfield District the locations with the strongest office demand are Lichfield City, Burntwood, Fazeley, and Hilliard's Cross. Lichfield City Centre is the only centre in the District which provides any sizable city/town centre office offer. Office provision in Burntwood, Fazeley, and Hilliard's Cross all provide Out of Centre or out of town office park style accommodation.
447. The Out of Centre office provision makes up the majority of office market activity in Lichfield. Lichfield City Centre accounts for around 9% of activity. However, it should be noted that Lichfield City also has other prominent office locations close to the two railway stations providing the public transport accessibility normally associated with town centre locations.
448. Office activity within Lichfield City Centre is generally geared towards smaller units with the 46-93 sqm (500-1,000 sqft) being most popular. There is demand for units 185 sqm (2,000 sqft) and below. However, demand for larger units is generally focussed beyond the City Centre.
449. The rate of completions in city/town centre locations has been around 12% - broadly in line with existing stock levels. There is no evidence to suggest there have been significant losses of office space in the District, and analysis of prior notification applications does not suggest significant losses of office space to residential uses in the city/town centres or elsewhere.
450. There has in recent years been increased practices in homeworking and hybrid working which has had a knock-on effect of reducing staff attendance levels in the office. This has resulted in some occupiers downsizing their office requirements. However, the evidence suggests this is likely to be less of a factor for smaller businesses as the opportunity to improve efficiencies due to more efficient space utilization become more limited at the smaller scale.
451. Lichfield as a District has a generally smaller than average sized business base, which would suggest homeworking is less likely to impact on office demand in the District. Within Lichfield City Centre this is particularly the case and increased home working are less likely to reduce demand for office space there.

11. KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

452. This final section provides interim advice and recommendations to help Lichfield District Council effectively plan and manage the vitality and viability of network of its centres over the lifetime of the plan through appropriate town centre policies. The policies would form part of the emerging new Local Plan.
453. The advice focuses on the next five to ten year period in accordance with the advice set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play “...*at the heart of local communities*” and should promote the long term vitality and viability of centres, “...*by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters*” (paragraph 90a).
454. Our policy and strategy advice is based on assessments of the quantitative and qualitative need for new retail (comparison and convenience goods) floorspace (**Section 7**) and commercial leisure uses over the forecast period (**Section 8**). These assessments have been informed by a comprehensive review and update of the dynamic economic and market trends that are impacting on the retail and leisure sectors, new evidence on retail and leisure habits of residents and visitors, and a SWOT analysis of Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre. Our advice also considers whether there is a need to review policies that promote the district’s office sector.
455. It is against this background that we provide the Council with recommendations on town centre policies to help inform plan-making and decision-making over the next 5-10 years, and over the lifetime of the plan up to 2043.
456. The following key policy themes are considered:
- Town centre first approach and the sequential test
 - Lichfield City Centre and Burntwood Town Centre
 - Retail and leisure impact thresholds
 - Centre boundary definitions
 - New settlements and centres

TOWN CENTRE FIRST APPROACH AND THE SEQUENTIAL TEST

457. To inform our advice, LSH has considered existing policy, which was reviewed in **Section 2** and whether these policies need to be amended to reflect the findings of this Study. In addition, our advice takes account of initial draft policies produced by the Council in preparation of the Regulation 18 Local Plan document (Lichfield District Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options (2024)).
458. On town centres first policy, the current adopted Core Policy 8 on ‘Our Centres’ establishes the hierarchy of centres and highlights that proposals for retail, leisure, office and cultural facilities will be focussed within the commercial centres of Burntwood and Lichfield City.

459. This policy should be carried forward within the emerging Local Plan to assist in the promotion and delivery of regeneration sites, particularly those for supporting new homes.
460. It is also noted that in the emerging Regulation 18 document, Objective 7 on 'Enhancing the vitality of our centres' reinforces the '*continued enhancement of our town, city and other centres to enhance their vibrancy and improve their offer*'.
461. In relation to retail assessments, Core Policy 8 also states, '*that retail assessments will be required in line with Policy E1 (Retail Assessments) and primary and secondary retail areas will be determined through the Lichfield District Local Plan Allocations document*'.
462. By way of reference, in the extant Local Plan Allocations (2008-29), Policy Lichfield 3: 'Lichfield Economy' identifies the primary shopping area (PSA) as the retail heart of Lichfield. Proposals for retail uses outside of the PSA or the town centre boundary (for all other main town centre uses) are required to undertake a sequential test and impact assessment in accordance with national guidance and Local Plan Strategy (2015) Policy E1. Other town centre uses, including cafes, restaurants and offices, are directed towards secondary frontages. The policy further details that any change of use application from retail to other non-retail uses will be resisted where it will undermine the vitality and viability of the City Centre.
463. Under the NPPF, the town centre is an area defined on the local authority's policies map, and includes the PSA and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the PSA. Furthermore, there is no policy requirement under the current the NPPF to define primary and/or secondary shopping frontages. The NPPF has removed the requirement for local authorities to identify shopping frontages. The control of shopping and service uses is legally less enforceable in commercial areas, as a change of use between Class E does not constitute development and will therefore not require planning permission.
464. On this basis the Council will need to update this policy and focus placemaking aspects especially mixed-use initiatives. Crucially, it will be important that proposals for new town centre uses continue to be assessed against the sequential test to ensure that opportunities to support the existing and future population are directed to town centres to ensure that existing retail and other town centre uses are not undermined. However, there may be scope to support very small scale convenience retail to serve large capacity development proposals, but these should still be subject to sequential and impact test policies.
465. The Council has drafted the intention to strengthen the centres by promoting a broader range of town centre uses, future proof its economy, and generate job growth. The emerging Regulation 18 document (Para 6.27) states '*The Local Plan 2043 aims to facilitate the regeneration of key sites in Burntwood town centre and Lichfield city centre, further supporting their important roles as social and economic hubs, whilst also recognising their sustainable location for delivering residential and employment development, which would in turn benefit the vitality and viability of both centres*'.

LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE AND BURNTWOOD TOWN CENTRE

466. Core Policy 1: of the extant Local Plan (2008-2029) provides the following in terms of the settlement hierarchy and associated growth.

Table 16: Settlement Hierarchy

Area	Hierarchy	Centres
Lichfield	Strategic Centre	Major growth in town/City Centre uses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit of 36,000 sqm gross additional retail within City Centre • Focus for District's leisure activities.
Burntwood	Other Large Centre	Town centre uses to meet local needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit of 14,000 sqm gross additional retail within Town Centre.

Source: Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy, Page 27

467. This is further reinforced under the following policies:
- Policy Lichfield 3: Lichfield Economy promotes Lichfield City Centre as a strategic centre by improving its range of shopping, leisure, business, cultural, education and tourist facilities whilst sustaining and enhancing the significance of its historic environment and heritage assets. 36,000 sqm (gross) development will be supported in Lichfield City Centre up to 2029 which includes 31,000 sqm (gross) comparison goods. A further 5,000 sqm will be allowable outside the town centre boundary for comparison bulky goods.
 - Policy Burntwood 1: Burntwood Environment states that the town will be promoted as an area of increased and more diverse economic activity including new retail and employment. The District Council encourages new retail development up to 14,000 sqm gross of which 13,000 sqm will be comparison goods.
468. The updated retail capacity assessment (**Section 7**) shows that there is no identified retail capacity for both convenience and comparison good. Hence in relation to the above extant policies there is no justification in promoting development for new comparison retail floorspace.
469. However, this should not discourage any potential opportunity to support the delivery of convenience goods floorspace in town centre locations that could support main food shopping needs, which would bring benefits to the wider centre from linked trips and raising a centre's shopping profile. Similarly, opportunities to support new comparison retail floorspace should be directed to the town centre as a priority given that this form of retail is the main driver for the town's retail economy.
470. It will be critical the edge and out of centre retail floorspace is resisted and where it is proposed is rigorously tested against in terms of impact. The same position

applies to leisure to ensure that existing provision and planned investment is not undermined by edge and out of centre development.

471. For Rural Centres the need to consider impact would apply under the wider policy, but this will require the definition of appropriate centre boundaries within the emerging Local Plan map.

OFFICE USE IN LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE

472. Policy Lichfield 3 supports up to 30,000 sqm gross of office provision will be supported in Lichfield City, focused on the City Centre. A sequential approach is applied to the location of offices; where there are no suitable office sites within the city centre, locations on the edge of the city centre will be considered before locations elsewhere within and accessible to Lichfield City. All sites should benefit from excellent public transport links to Lichfield City.
473. However the current supply of land available for office space in Lichfield City Centre is limited. LSH recommend further provision is identified within the City Centre so that a sequential approach may be effective. LSH recommend provision is identified which can meet the identified needs of City Centre occupiers which is typically at the smaller end of the market.
474. Policy LC2 identifies mixed-use sites in Lichfield City, of which L26: Land at Birmingham Road is considered to be potentially suitable to support up to 30,000 sqm of additional office space. This is the only site in Lichfield City identified to accommodate this level of new office space. LSH recommends the Council retains this site for office uses.

RETAIL AND LEISURE IMPACT THRESHOLDS

475. The NPPF requires an impact assessment to be undertaken for “*retail, leisure and office development outside of town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan*” (paragraph 94). Local planning authorities should require an impact assessment if the development is over a proportionate, locally set floorspace threshold, but if there is no local threshold, then the NPPF default threshold (2,500 Sqm gross) should be applied. To help inform the setting of an appropriate impact threshold, the PPG (Paragraph: 015. Reference ID: 2b-015-20190722) also states that it will be important to consider the following:
- scale of proposals relative to town centres;
 - the existing viability and vitality of town centres;
 - cumulative effects of recent developments;
 - whether local town centres are vulnerable;
 - likely effects of development on any town centre strategy; and
 - impact on any other planned investment.
476. Under extant Policy E1 on Retail Assessments, the current established local impact thresholds for retail assessments are as follows:

Table 17: Thresholds for Retail Impact Assessments

Centre	Assessment required	Assessment may be required
Lichfield	Over 1,000 sqm gross	Under 1,000 sqm gross
Burntwood	Over 500 sqm gross	Under 500 sqm gross
Other Centres	Over 100 Sqm gross	Not required

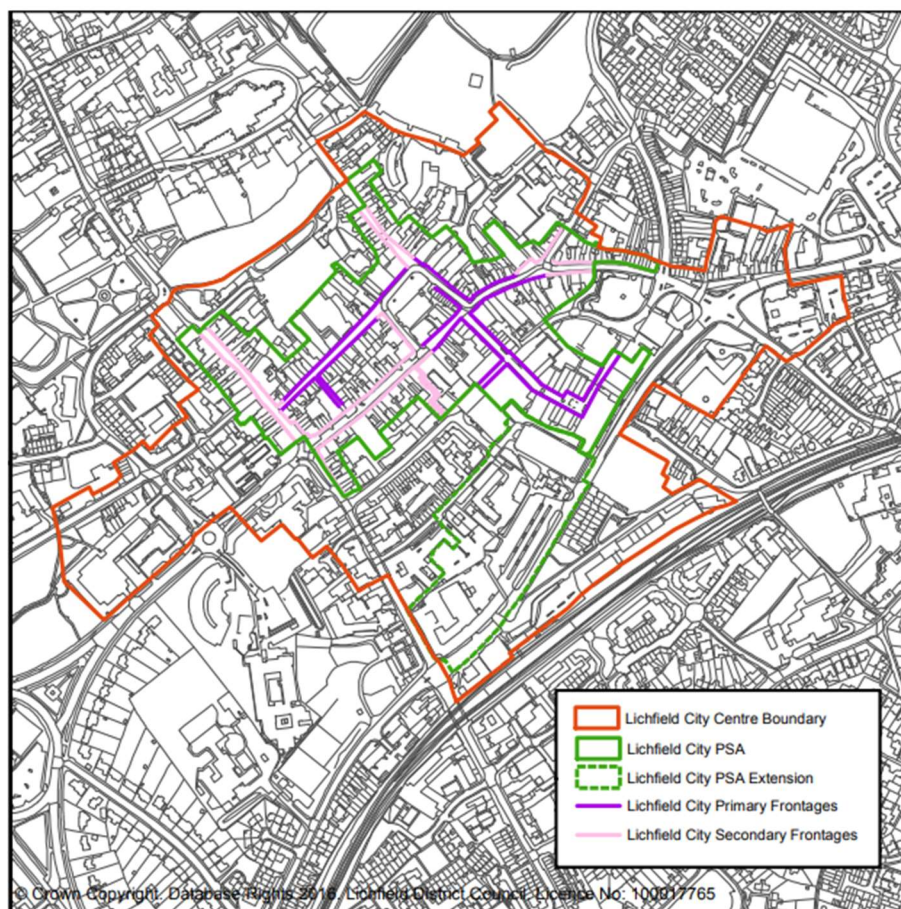
Source: Source: Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy, Page 65

477. The above indicates a varying threshold across the centres. We advise a uniform impact threshold of 280 sqm gross across the District's centres would be appropriate. This stems from our recent advice to other local authorities and importantly the Sunday Trading Act defines a 'large shop' as generally being over 280 sqm gross. It is the Government's intention through this Act to protect smaller, independent stores which are perceived to be financially weaker and therefore require protection from unfair competition from the major supermarket operators. In general terms therefore it follows that proposals for retail floorspace over 280 sqm gross are unlikely to be a purely local facility and will have the ability to draw trade from outside of their immediate local catchment with potential consequent impacts on existing stores and centres.
478. This uniform threshold will provide the Council with greater flexibility to robustly assess the individual ('solus') and cumulative impacts of any smaller commercial floorspace (including convenience stores) proposed outside of existing centres that could compete 'like-against-like' with existing, planned and proposed investment in the Districts centres.

CENTRE BOUNDARIES

479. The Local Plan Allocations (2008-2029) (Policy Lichfield 3: Lichfield Economy) identifies The Primary Shopping Area (PSA) as the retail heart of Lichfield. Proposals for retail uses outside of the PSA or the town centre boundary (for all other main town centre uses) will be required to undertake a sequential test and impact assessment in accordance with national guidance and Local Plan Strategy (2015) Policy E1.

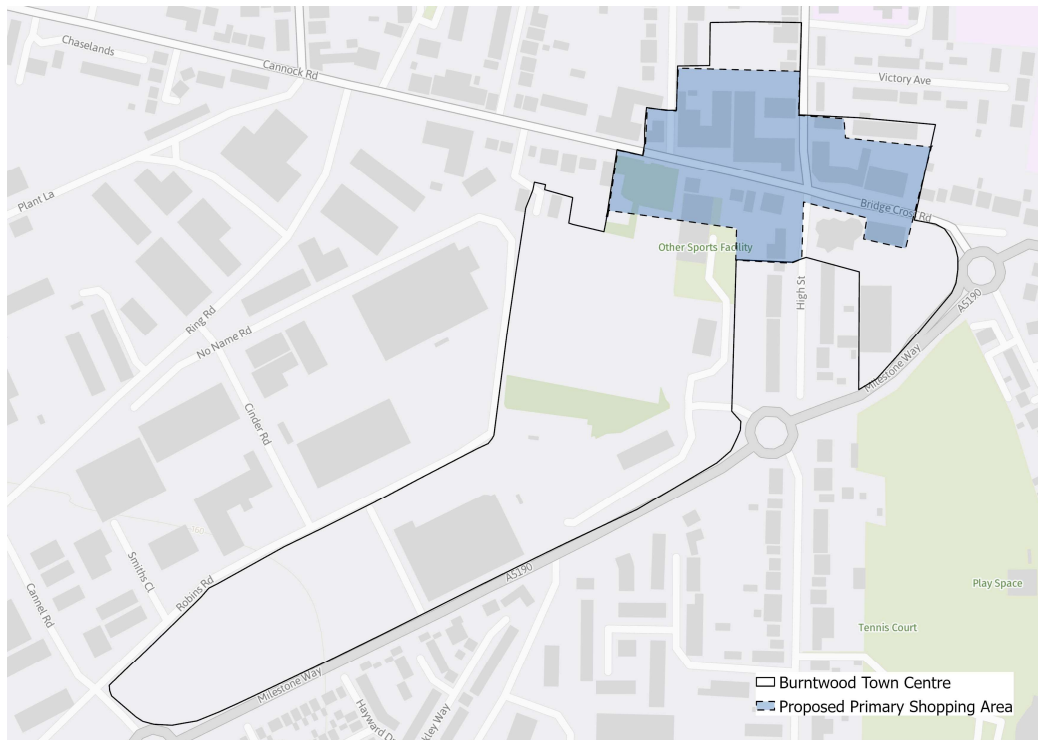
Figure 49: Lichfield City Centre Boundary, Retail Areas and Frontages



Source: The Local Plan Allocations (2008-2029), Page 30

480. As shown, the Policies Map defines a centre boundary for Lichfield City Centre along with a defined PSA boundary and a potential extension to the south east that covers the Birmingham Road masterplan site at the heart of which will be the Everyman Cinema multiplex.
481. We consider that the that the centre boundary and the PSA (including extension) remain appropriate and should be retained for the emerging local plan.
482. The revised NPPF (December 2024) has removed the requirement for local authorities to identify shopping frontages. On this basis there is no policy requirement under the NPPF to define primary and/or secondary shopping frontages and this should be removed.
483. In relation to Burntwood the defined town centre remains appropriate as shown below. We also recommend defining a PSA and have provided a suggested area based on the concentration of retail uses as defined in the NPPF.

Figure 50: Burntwood Town Centre Boundary and Suggested PSA



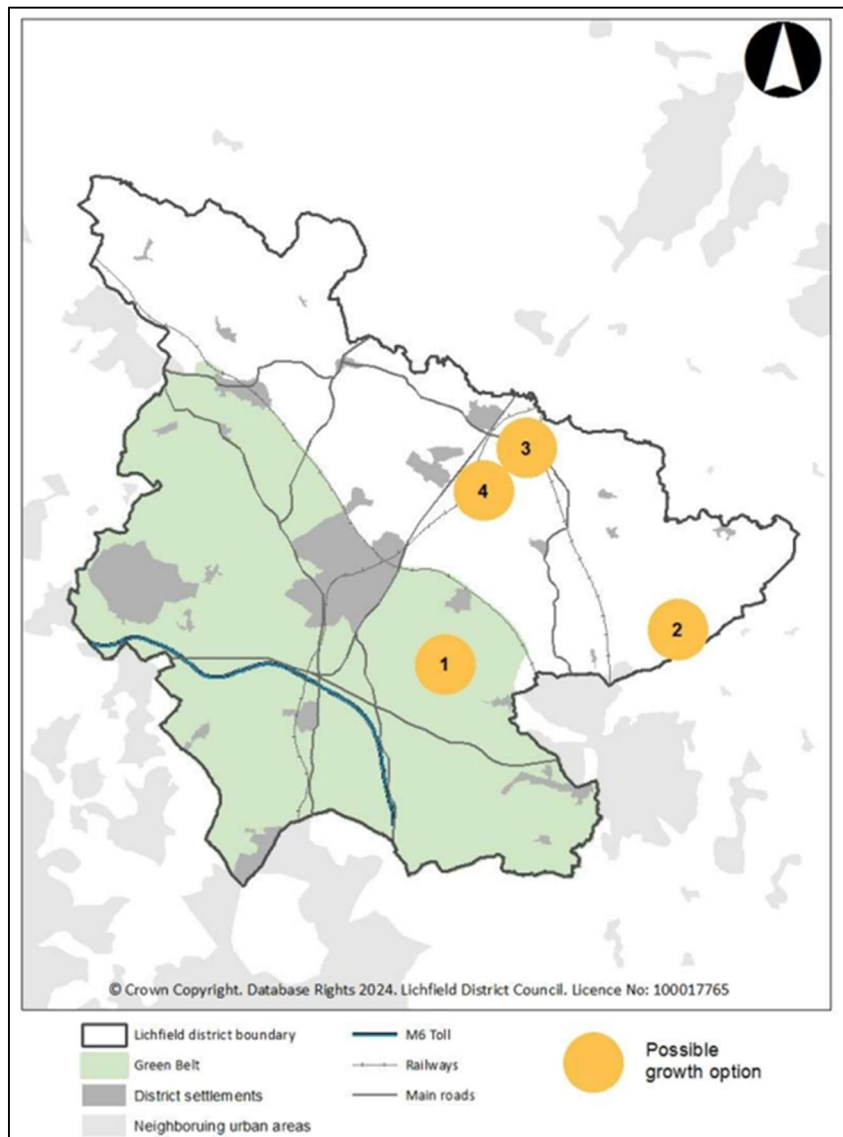
Source: LSH

484. For the Rural Centres there are village settlement boundaries denoted on the Lichfield District Local Plan 2008-2029 Policies Map. These should remain to ensure that the policies that seek to protect the viability of day-to-day services within these centres can be robustly applied

NEW SETTLEMENTS

485. It is noted that in the emerging Regulation 18 document, Objective 1 refers to *'Meeting the districts housing requirements to 2043 and assisting in meeting unmet needs from within the housing market area where possible. Whilst easing pressure on our city, our existing towns and villages by building new homes in the right places, including the consideration of a new settlement'*.

Figure 51: Spatial New Settlements Option Areas



Source: Source: Lichfield District Local Plan 2043: Issues and Options (2024), Page 37

486. It is recommended that the emerging Local Plan includes guidance for proposals that include the provision of a new centre to serve new residential communities and provide commercial town centre accommodation within new settlements. This could come in the form of a standalone policy or guidance.
487. The main purpose of the policy would be to ensure that proposals for new town centre uses within a new settlement are commensurate in scale and function to the new and existing residential catchment. This is to ensure that a new centre truly meets the local retail and service needs of the existing and future population, which would mitigate any potential significant adverse impact on existing centres.
488. As part of this policy, it is advised that applicant provide evidence that that the proposals for a new centre are commercial feasible and can be delivered when there is a sufficient critical mass of residents to support businesses. Consideration should be given to appropriate assumptions on expenditure retention rates to

support commercial uses. This element of the policy is to ensure that developers are committed to delivering key local services as part of major residential or mixed use scheme.

SUMMARY

489. In summary, we consider that policy on town centres and town centre uses within the emerging Local Plan should take account of the following recommendations:
- As the headline retail capacity forecasts have shown there is no capacity for both convenience and comparison goods and there is no requirement for the Council to allocate any new sites for retail provision to the period to 2043.
 - Define a PSA for Burntwood.
 - Apply local impact thresholds of 280 Sqm gross in respect to proposals for new retail proposals that are not located within the defined PSA (or the village settlement boundaries defined for rural centres) and leisure proposals where they are not located within a defined centre boundary.
 - Provide guidance on proposals for new centres to serve new settlements, such as key housing site allocations and major residential windfall sites.