

Ipswich Local Plan

Retail Parks Survey February 2015



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Section A – Introduction and Policy Context

Policy context

The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning authorities should pursue policies which support the viability and vitality of town centres and in this respect requires planning authorities to apply the sequential test to town centre uses proposed outside of the centre. The centre is preferable, followed by edge of centre¹, and finally out of centre.

The policies in the adopted Ipswich Core Strategy and Policies development plan document (2011) reflect this approach and aim to direct retail uses into the town centre and district and local centres, as set out below.

Policy CS14: Retail Development

Major retail development in edge of centre or out of centre locations will be considered in light of national policy and the Council's aim to enhance the role, vitality and viability of Ipswich Central Shopping Area.

Policy DM23: Major Retail Proposals Outside Defined Centres

Major retail proposals for more than 200 sqm gross floorspace in locations outside defined centres will only be permitted if the proposal can be demonstrated to be acceptable under the terms of Planning Policy Statement 4 (PPS4), particularly in terms of:

- a. the scale of the development;**
- b. the sequential approach;**
- c. avoiding significant adverse impact on existing defined centres;**
- d. accessibility by a choice of means of transport.**

The defined centres are identified as the Central Shopping Area, District Centres and Local Centres.

Purpose of the Survey

The Council surveys the use of units and vacancy rates in the Town Centre and the District and Local Centres annually. The purpose of also surveying the retail parks is that this completes the picture in terms of the pattern of retail provision across the Borough. The survey of retail parks was last undertaken in 2004², although an internal review was conducted in 2009.

Retail Parks and Out of Centre Supermarkets

Using the NPPF definition, there are seven 'out of centre' retail parks in the Borough (Orwell Retail Park, Euro Retail Park, Anglia Retail Park, Ranelagh Road, Commercial Road/Russell Road and Futura Park). The units on Ranelagh Road are adjacent to Orwell Retail Park but have their own separate parking areas. The retail parks are shown on the map at Appendix 1. Within the Borough boundary there are also four 'out of centre' supermarkets (Waitrose, Morrison's, Asda and Sainsbury's). The permission for Waitrose at Futura Park was granted as enabling development for the wider Futura Park employment site.

¹ Edge of Centre is defined in the NPPF as 'For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of a primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.'

² Food Superstores and Retail Warehouses (Ipswich Borough Council, July 2004)

Because of the constricted nature of the Borough boundary retail parks outside of the Borough also function as part of the town. There is a retail park with supermarket which is in the neighbouring Babergh local authority area but which almost abuts the Borough boundary (Copdock) and similarly a Sainsbury's supermarket and a Homebase DIY store occupy a site (Felixstowe Road) that abuts the Borough boundary but is in the Suffolk Coastal administrative area. Finally, there is a cluster of retail units at Martlesham which, although some six miles from Ipswich town centre and in the Suffolk Coastal local authority area, contains a large and small supermarket plus a range of other stores.

The numbers of retail units in each retail park in Ipswich is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Retail Parks in Ipswich Borough

Retail Centre	Total Units
Suffolk Retail Park, London Rd	6
Anglia Retail Park, Bury Road	11
Futura Park	8
Euro Retail Park	13
Orwell Retail Park	3
Ranelagh Road	5
Commercial Road & Russell Road	10
Total	56

Section B – Survey Results

Methodology

The surveys were undertaken by visiting each of the retail parks and carrying out a visual inspection. The inspection involved noting down the uses within each unit, including the operator and whether any units are vacant. These site based surveys were undertaken during July 2014.

Commentary

All but two of the retail parks within Ipswich are fully occupied. The most notable exception is the Anglia Retail Park on Bury Road where five of the eight main units are vacant, albeit that three of the units were last occupied as a single unit (10-14). Anglia Retail Park also contains three small occupied units, two of which are restaurants, whilst a third houses a mobile phone retailer. Euro Retail Park also has one vacant unit as a result of Hughes Electrical relocating to an enlarged existing retail premises on Felixstowe Road, which also houses the company offices. The number of vacant units is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Vacant units at retail parks

Retail Centre	Vacant Units	Total Units
Suffolk Retail Park, London Rd	0	6
Anglia Retail Park, Bury Road	5	11
Futura Park	0	8
Euro Retail Park	1	13
Orwell Retail Park ³	0	3
Ranelagh Road	0	5
Commercial Road & Russell Road	0	10
Total	6	56

In total there are 56 retail units in the seven identified retail parks, plus the four supermarkets identified in Section A. Of the 56 retail park units six are vacant (10.7%) but as noted above five of the six are on one site. The Anglia Retail Park on Bury Road occupies a site which is between a currently unused Park and Ride site (which has recently been granted temporary consent for car sales) and a large playing field area which is proposed as an allocation for housing.

Different uses are defined by the Use Classes Order⁴. The use classes are shown in Appendix 1. A1 uses can be broadly classified as 'shops'. Twelve of the 56 units identified are occupied by non-A1 uses and these are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Non-A1 uses in retail parks

Business Type	Use Class	Total
Restaurants & Cafes	A3/A5	5
Gymnasiums	D1	2
Bingo Hall	D2	1
Motor Bike Sales	Sui Generis	1
Vehicle Rental	Sui Generis	1
Vehicle Servicing	B1	1
Bank	A2	1
Total		12

³ Note this is also referred to as Glasswells Retail Park

⁴ The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)

The A2 and A3 uses identified in Table 3 occupy smaller free standing units. The restaurants are all national chains. The pattern of national retailers occupying the retail parks is repeated over nearly all of sites. The only exceptions being Orwell Motorcycles and Stellinson's Electrical, both occupying units on Ranelagh Road, who serve the eastern counties and Glasswell's furniture store in Orwell Retail Park, which is a regional company confined to just four stores in Suffolk and Essex. Glasswell's also has a restaurant in its store which is understood to act as a draw for customers in its own right.

The Out of Centre Shopping Supplementary Planning Guidance (1997) identifies a list of items which are considered to be bulky goods, which are generally considered to be those which would individually require transportation by car or larger vehicle. These items are:

- (a) Do-It-Yourself stores and builders merchants;
- (b) Garden Centre Goods;
- (c) Furniture and Carpet Stores;
- (d) Electrical Goods;
- (e) Car Accessories;
- (f) Car Sales and Caravans; and
- (g) Other retail trades dealing in bulky goods and requiring display areas of a size unlikely to be available in the Town Centre.

In order to reduce competition with town centre units, planning conditions can restrict the sale of goods in retail parks to bulky goods although often with an allowance for a proportion (up to 10%) of non-bulky ancillary goods. Many of the units in the retail parks are occupied by bulky goods retailers although a number would not fit within the categories listed above. A breakdown of types of A1 retailer across the seven Retail Parks is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Types of A1 retailers at retail parks

Type of A1 Retailer	Total
Home furnishings (furniture, carpets etc)	15
DIY including tiles	5
Mobile phones	2
Supermarket	1
Electrical goods & machinery	2
Clothing (including shoes)	4
Pets and pet supplies	2
Vintner	1
Stationery and IT goods	1
Variety stores	2
Bicycles and motoring accessories	2
Sports goods	1
Vacant A1	6
Total	44

In line with the Council's desire to protect town centre retailing, the majority of out of centre retailers sell bulky goods. The four clothing stores include Next, Matalan, Brantano and Mamas & Papas, the latter of which sells baby clothes but also larger items such as cots, prams and pushchairs. The variety stores are Argos, which also has a town centre outlet but sells bulky goods such as flat pack furniture amongst non-bulky goods, and the B&M Homestore at Euro Retail Park which sells a wide variety of goods including some flat-pack furniture items.

Apart from the retail parks within the Borough boundary there are two parks situated within Suffolk Coastal and Babergh districts which are within the catchment area of Ipswich. The

Copdock Interchange retail park has a number of units including Mothercare, Toys R Us and B&M. The retail park at Martlesham contains mostly bulky goods retailers but also an M&S Simply Food store and a Next, although this also sells home furnishings. Both the Copdock and Martlesham retail parks are fully occupied.

Section C - Conclusions

The units in the Retail Parks of Ipswich are mostly occupied, with the exception of the Anglia Retail Park on Bury Road. This should be viewed within the context of the level of vacant units in the Central Shopping Area and District and Local Centres⁵ and the policy aims for the Central Shopping Area and District and Local Centres as outlined above.

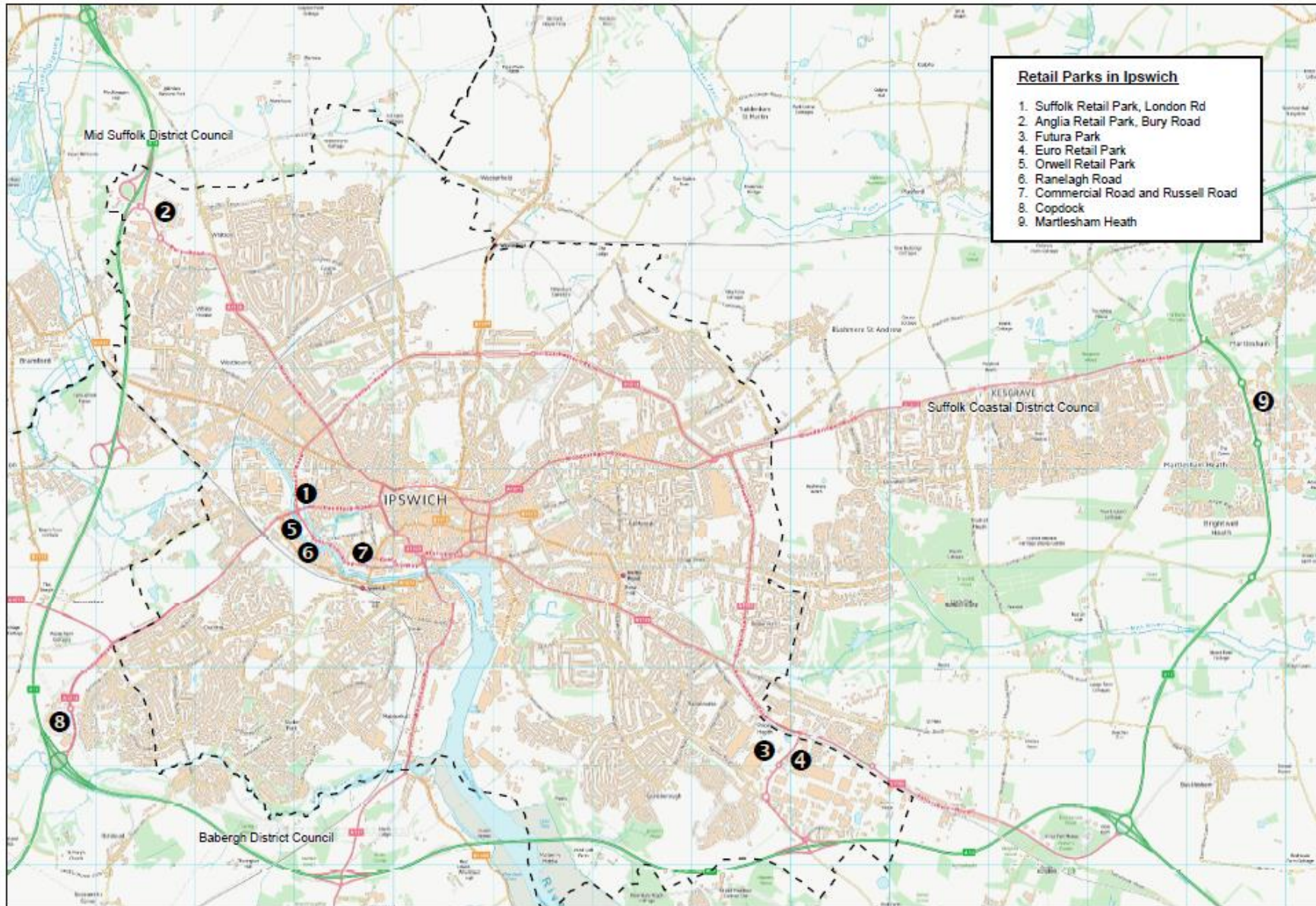
Comparison with the 2004 Food Superstores and Retail Warehouse report, the most recent published, shows that the main changes since that time are:

- Fewer vacant units on retail parks, with the exception of Anglia Retail Park which was fully occupied in 2004;
- Greater number of A3/A5 uses;
- A small increase in the number of stores selling non-bulky goods (such as mobile phone stores).

There continues to be pressure on the 'town centre first' approach which has lately been illustrated by an application by Morrison's to occupy part of the B&Q unit at Euro Retail Park as a supermarket, which was refused in October 2014.

⁵ Refer to Central Shopping Area – Identified Frontages report 2014 and District and Local Centres report 2014

Appendix 1: Location of Retail Parks



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Appendix 2: Use Classes

Source: Planning Portal

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/changeofuse/>

A1 Shops - Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and internet cafes.

A2 Financial and professional services - Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices.

A3 Restaurants and cafés - For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises - restaurants, snack bars and cafes.

A4 Drinking establishments - Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not night clubs).

A5 Hot food takeaways - For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.

B1 Business - Offices (other than those that fall within A2), research and development of products and processes, light industry appropriate in a residential area.

B2 General industrial - Use for industrial process other than one falling within class B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste).

B8 Storage or distribution - This class includes open air storage.

C1 Hotels - Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).

C2 Residential institutions - Residential care homes, hospitals, nursing homes, boarding schools, residential colleges and training centres.

C2A Secure Residential Institution - Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.

C3 Dwellinghouses - this class is formed of 3 parts:

- C3(a) covers use by a single person or a family (a couple whether married or not, a person related to one another with members of the family of one of the couple to be treated as members of the family of the other), an employer and certain domestic employees (such as an au pair, nanny, nurse, governess, servant, chauffeur, gardener, secretary and personal assistant), a carer and the person receiving the care and a foster parent and foster child.

- C3(b): up to six people living together as a single household and receiving care e.g. supported housing schemes such as those for people with learning disabilities or mental health problems.
- C3(c) allows for groups of people (up to six) living together as a single household. This allows for those groupings that do not fall within the C4 HMO definition, but which fell within the previous C3 use class, to be provided for i.e. a small religious community may fall into this section as could a homeowner who is living with a lodger.

C4 Houses in multiple occupation - small shared houses occupied by between three and six unrelated individuals, as their only or main residence, who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom.

D1 Non-residential institutions - Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.

D2 Assembly and leisure - Cinemas, music and concert halls, bingo and dance halls (but not night clubs), swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums or area for indoor or outdoor sports and recreations (except for motor sports, or where firearms are used).

Sui Generis - Certain uses do not fall within any use class and are considered 'sui generis'. Such uses include: theatres, houses in multiple occupation, hostels providing no significant element of care, scrap yards. Petrol filling stations and shops selling and/or displaying motor vehicles. Retail warehouse clubs, nightclubs, laundrettes, taxi businesses, amusement centres and casinos.