RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2006-2021)

Draft Retail Topic Paper

April 2008

Context

BACKGROUND

In January 2007 the Council issued for public consultation the Local Development Plan: Preferred Strategy. The Strategy was the first stage of the new statutory local development plan (LDP).

The next stage in the plan making process is the production of a deposit draft LDP. In order to ensure the soundness of the emerging LDP and transparency in the plan making process, the Council has produced a series of topic papers.

The topic papers address the main area of policy to be considered in the LDP. **It should be stressed that these papers are a starting point for policy development, through the sustainability appraisal process and as the Council's evidence base develops, emerging LDP policy will evolve and be refined.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Retailing is one of the planning issues that affects every segment of the population, as shopping is unavoidable for provision of essentials for living. Shopping is also the means for people to obtain the non-essential goods that define their lifestyle. Access to shops is an aspect of quality of life: part of the effort to create and enhance sustainable communities will be to ensure good access for all people to high quality shops.

Whilst city, town and other centres are the traditional locations for shops, out-of-centre retails parks are an established feature of most communities. Electronic retailing ("e-tailing") is emerging as another modern trend in retailing.

There is a separate Topic Paper to deal specifically with town centres. The Retailing Topic Paper will deal with the broad issues of planning for future retail development in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Retailing made the national headlines in 2007 when the Competition Commission published their provisional findings of their investigation into the groceries market. The report has suggested the possibility of changing national planning policy to facilitate competition between food retailers, but acknowledges that the planning system "has to balance conflicting demands, not all of which favour development". The Commissions' final report is expected in 2008; whether or not there will be any changes to national planning policy remains to be seen.

Appendix A contains material produced for Pontypridd town centre in October 2007 by Knight Frank LLP, and is included with the author's permission to give an up-to-date assessment of the UK retail sector context.

The topic paper will outline:

- **The policy context** for retail development including a explanation of national, regional and local policy;
- **Key Issues in Rhondda Cynon Taf**, which relate specifically to retail development;

- **Preferred Strategy,** policy in respect of retail development, representations to the Strategy and proposed policy response, and
- **Draft LDP Policies,** which provides a policy context for new retail development.

2. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan (adopted 2004)

The Wales Spatial Plan provides a framework for the future spatial development of Wales. Rhondda Cynon Taf along with the neighbouring authorities of Cardiff, Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly and the Vale of Glamorgan has been identified as part of the South East – Capital Network Zone. The vision for the Capital Network is:

> "An innovative skilled area offering a high quality of life – international yet distinctively Welsh. It will compete internationally be increasing its global viability through stronger links between the Valleys and the coast and the UK and Europe, helping spread prosperity within the area and benefiting other parts of Wales".

Whilst the Spatial Plan may not provide a detailed framework for retail development in South East Wales, it does nevertheless provide a number of clear propositions relevant to retailing in the sections on "building sustainable communities" and "promoting a sustainable economy":

- One of the objectives for sustainable communities is to, "Ensure that we provide high quality services as accessibly as possible by reflecting changing demographic structure and distribution, providing community services in the main local settlements and specialist services in the area centres". This is relevant to retailing if shops are regarded as provision of a service to the public.

- The sustainable economy objectives include this statement: "Ensure area hubs, as important economic drivers and service providers, are attractive for private sector investment and as places where people want to live, work and visit." Area hubs are understood to be settlements that act as centres for socio-economic activities, which would include retailing. A healthy retail sector would make a place an attractive for residents, employees and visitors.

Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 (June 2006)

Turning Heads – A Strategy for the Heads of the Valleys 2020 as the name suggests, outlines a strategy for regenerating the northern Valley areas of South East Wales. In Rhondda Cynon Taf the strategy area includes Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Maerdy, Mountain Ash, Aberdare and Hirwaun. The objectives of the programme reflect those of the Wales Spatial Plan in seeking to ensure:

- An attractive and well used natural, historic and built environment;
- A vibrant economic landscape offering new opportunities;
- A well educated, skilled and healthier population;
- An appealing and coherent tourism and leisure experience, and
- Public confidence in a shared bright future

The Strategy does not include a section specific to retailing, but does contain sections relevant to retailing, including “A Vibrant Economy” and “Tourism and Leisure”. The economic goals for 2020 include:

- The Heads of the Valleys region will be viewed as a nationally competitive business and investment location
- The majority of residents will be in work and contributing to the Welsh economy
- Residents will have access to a more diverse range of business and employment opportunities

A vibrant retail sector would contribute towards making the region attractive for business, towards provision of jobs for residents and towards diversifying the range of business and job opportunities.

Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement

Assembly Government retail planning policy is embodied in Ministerial Interim Planning Policy Statement 02/2005, which amends sections 10.1 to 10.3 of Planning Policy Wales (2002). Supplementary guidance in relation to retailing is contained in Technical Advice Note TAN 4: Retailing and Town Centres (November 1996). The Planning Policy Wales Companion Guide (2006) relates the guidance to the LDP system, identifying clear statements of national policy that should only be repeated in where local circumstance require.

The Assembly Government’s objectives for retailing are to:

- Secure accessible, efficient, competitive and innovative retail provision for all the communities of Wales, in both urban and rural areas;
- Promote established town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing, leisure and for other functions complementary to it.

In order to achieve this the Assembly Government will seek to ensure that retail provision is co-located with other commercial businesses, leisure facilities, community facilities and employment. Development Plans should have a clear strategy and policies for retail development, to promote a successful retail sector supporting existing communities and centres. Plans should identify changing pressures and opportunities and devise appropriate responses to them. In deciding whether to identify sites for retail development, precedence should be given to establishing quantitative need for both convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) floorspace, before qualitative considerations are brought into play. Criteria are given for making allocations in excess of quantitative need. The sequential approach should be taken to selecting sites where there is a need to meet, giving first preference to town centre locations. A criteria based policy should be included for proposals on unallocated sites.

Technical Advice Note TAN 4: Retailing and Town Centres (November 1996)

TAN 4 outlines information requirements for retail studies, and states that applications for retail development over 2,500 m2 should be supported by an impact assessment.

3. LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

A Better Life – Our Community Plan 2001 – 20014

A Better Life - Our Community Plan sets out a framework for creating a brighter future for everyone who lives and works in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The plan was developed through the Better Life Consortium, during 2003/2004. The Community Plan identifies 5 key themes under which are a series of local level aims. The key themes are**:**

- Safer Communities
- Our Living Space
- Our Health and Well Being
- Boosting Our Local Economy
- Learning for Growth

The key themes identified in the Community Plan has been developed into strategies for improving the quality of life in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The consultation draft Strategy (2008) sets the following themes:

- Healthy Environments;
- Community Collaboration and Prevention;
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing;
- Children and Young People;
- Work and Health;
- Maintaining Independence;
- Transport and Access

The Community Plan states that, “Our Shared Vision for Rhondda Cynon Taf” is that, “Rhondda Cynon Taf will be a community where everyone who lives, works in or visits the area will enjoy the benefits of a better quality of life, achieving their potential, while helping to develop and protect the area for the benefit of others.” Accessible and high quality retail provision is an aspect of quality of life.

The goals for “Our Health and Well Being” includes, “Local people whose health and access to high quality health services is equal to the best in Britain.” A vital aspect of health is diet and hygiene, where accessibility to shops that sell a good range of convenience (food) goods is a factor.

The goals for “Boosting Our Local Economy” include, “Towns, villages, streets and homes that have been improved and revitalised, through new development which is sympathetic to our environment.” The retail sector is an important element of the economy.

Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP Retail Study (2007)

Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners originally drafted a retail study of Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2003. This was updated in 2007. The purpose of the study is to provide evidence of quantitative need for retail floorspace (floorspace for sales of both convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) goods) between 2007 and 2021. The main finding is that planning commitments for retail development will meet much of the need in the early part of the plan period, and that there could be a significant comparison (non-food) goods floorspace need after 2016.

4. KEY PLANNING ISSUES IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

The key issues to be addressed by the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP have been identified by making an assessment of the following:

- The results of pre-deposit consultation with key stakeholders;
- The results of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping Exercise; and
- A review of baseline social, economic and environmental information,

The issues identified through this process will inform directly the development of the spatial strategy for the LDP.

Pre Deposit Consultation

Part of the pre-deposit consultation process was to hold two visioning exercises, one with Elected Members of the Council on 23 January 2006, and the second with stakeholders (which included representatives from a wide range of organisations involved in service delivery in the area and other interested parties) on 24 January 2006.

The visioning exercises identified retail issues as follows:

- Need to retain wealth in the County Borough through reducing spending leakage;
- Out of town retail and leisure v town centre regeneration.

Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment March 2006

The Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment identified the following retail issue (Appendix II, page 64):

- The majority of people in RCT are employed in manufacturing (22.9%). The second highest proportions are employed in the wholesale & retail trade. The SA and LDP should consider enabling a wider range of employment opportunities through policy and employment land allocations in order to maintain a balanced employment structure.

Baseline information

Retail issues identified in the LDP Preferred Strategy (on page 12) are as follows:

- Of the 78,370 people who work in Rhondda Cynon Taf, …. 20% are employed in distribution, hotels and restaurants (Review of Economic Analysis of Rhondda Cynon Taf 2006)
- The main concentrations of out of centre retail development are in the Talbot Green/Pontyclun, Pontypridd/Upper Boat and Aberdare/Aberaman areas. Existing out of centre food floor space amounts to 22,500 sq metres (gross) whilst non-food amounts to 50,885 sq m (gross) (Rhondda Cynon Taf Retail Survey 2005).
- From 2001–2005 the percentage of vacant retail units in town centres of Pontypridd, Aberdare, Talbot Green, Tonypandy, Porth, Mountain Ash, Treorchy, Ferndale and Tonyrefail fell from 14% to 9.5%. (Rhondda Cynon Taf Retail Survey 2005)
- Major retail investment on comparison (non-food) shopping, has in recent years been concentrated in larger towns and retail parks outside the County Borough. An assessment of comparison (non-food) goods shopping patterns suggested that comparison (non-food) expenditure outflow from the County Borough is approximately 60% of total expenditure on comparison (non-food) goods (Rhondda Cynon Taf Retail Survey 2004).

5. PREFERRED STRATEGY

The preferred strategy provides the following policy framework for retail development in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Objectives of the Local Development Plan

Paragraph 4.2 of the Preferred Strategy (January 2007) list 16 objectives for the LDP. The following objectives are the most relevant to retail development:

- Promote integrated communities, with opportunities for living, working and socialising for all;
- Provide an environment that encourages a healthy and safe lifestyle and promotes well being;
- Reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable modes of transport;
- Provide for a sustainable economy;
- Provide for a diverse range of job opportunities;
- Provide a high quality built environment that promotes community pride.

Development Strategy

Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.11 of the Preferred Strategy sets out a development strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The strategy area is divided in into two distinct parts:

- Northern Strategy Area, and
- Southern Strategy Area

The Northern Strategy area comprises the key settlements of Tonypandy, Porth, Treorchy, Treherbert, Ferndale, Tylorstown, Mountain Ash and Hirwaun and the principal town of Aberdare. In this area the emphasis is on building sustainable communities and halting the process of depopulation and decline.

The Southern Strategy area includes the principal towns of Pontypridd and Llantrisant and key settlements of Tonyrefail and Llanharan. In the south of the County Borough the emphasis is on sustainable growth that benefits Rhondda Cynon Taf as a whole.

The strategy recognises the important role that principal towns and key settlements play in providing services of both local and county importance. Where possible, development will be focused on the principal towns and key settlements of the County Borough in order to support and reinforce the important role of these centres play as places for social and economic activity.

Retailing

The Development Strategy does not have a separate heading for retailing, but does included relevant statements.

The principal towns of Aberdare and Llantrisant are areas in which significant new housing, employment and retail development will be accommodated (para. 6.9). Increasing employment in economic sectors including distribution is expected (para. 6.18). Eight strategic sites are identified, that will because of their size and position promote sustainable regeneration that will benefit the community as a whole (para. 6.37). Strategic site 7, the Mwyndy/Talbot Green area, is considered suitable for retail, commercial, educational, civic, employment and residential uses.

Strategic Policy

There is one strategic policy relevant to retailing, as follows:

SP 8 Retailing and Town Centres

Proposals for new and enhanced retail provision in, or adjacent to, town and district centres will be permitted where they improve the vitality and viability of the centre. Outside town and district centres proposals will be subject to an assessment of need, phasing considerations (particularly where need is linked to large scale strategic sites) and an application of the sequential test. Proposals will only be permitted where they: -

a) Contribute to sustaining and enhancing town centre vitality and viability;
b) Reinforce cultural identity and a sense of place;
c) Improve the quality and attractiveness of the town.

Representations to the Preferred Strategy

Representations made in respect of the retailing element of the Preferred Strategy fall broadly into 3 areas – general representations; those in respect of Strategic Policy SP 8; and those in respect of references to other retailing locations. Representations concerning retailing in the context of the strategic sites are dealt with in the Strategic Sites paper.

Outlined below is a summary of the main representations submitted in respect of retailing, under the 3 headings. Thirteen issues have been distilled from the representations. Responses to each of the main representations are included.

Representations on general retail matters

Issue: should the LDP rely on the retail sector to meet employment needs?

Response: With the traditional manufacturing base being rationalised in the face of pressure from abroad, the economy needs to diversify where possible. This means that the retail sector should make a contribution to meeting employment needs, but over-reliance on any one sector should be avoided.

Issue: Should the LDP identify the need for future retail development?

Response: A retail capacity assessment of the County Borough, originally prepared in 2003, has been updated in 2007 to provide a retail evidence base. The basic conclusion is that quantitative need for retail floorspace in addition to existing commitments is limited in the short to medium term.

Representations to Strategic Policy SP 8 Retailing and Town Centres

Issue: Should the LDP reflect PPW or relax the criteria for retail development adjacent to centres?

Response: The retail chapter of PPW was updated by MIPPS 02/2005 and makes no provision for sites adjacent to centres to be treated in the same way as in-centre sites. Therefore, it would be appropriate to delete from policy SP 8 the words, “or adjacent to”.

Issue: Should the LDP only require retail needs and impact assessment for out-of-centre proposals?

Response: PPW is clear that retail need assessment is not required for proposals on in-centre sites. Retail impact assessment would still be required where in-centre schemes could be inappropriately large for the centre.

Issue: Should the LDP only require retail needs and impact assessment for unallocated sites?

Response: PPW is also clear that retail need assessment is not required for proposals on sites allocated for retail development in an up-to-date plan. SP 8 should be amended accordingly.

Issue: Should the LDP require retail development to reinforce cultural identity and sense of place?

Response: Although not an explicit requirement of PPW retail chapter, the protection of cultural identity and promoting a sense of place is an essential criterion for fostering sustainable communities. As retail uses usually lie at the heart of communities, the design and appearance of retail development is crucial to the healthy future of communities.

Representations on other retail locations

Issue: Aberdare - should Tirfounder Fields be allocated for some form of retail development?

Response: The site has a history from 1987 of consents for retail development. An Asda superstore, a restaurant and some smaller units have been built, but provision remains for large units for sale of specified durable goods. The objector considers that the site should be a retail counter-attraction to Merthyr Tydfil, which is accepted and agreed. As in terms of retail formats, "like competes with like", the objective should be to provide a similar format to Cyfarthfa Retail Park and to avoid formats that would however, divert trade from the town centres of Aberdare and Mountain Ash.

Issue: Pontypridd - should the Brown Lenox site be allocated for a foodstore?

Response: There is a convenience (food) retail need equivalent to one superstore in the medium term in this area. The previous application on this site was refused on the basis that a sequentially preferable site for a supermarket was available in the town centre. The LDP will review the issue and give appropriate consideration to allocating foodstore on the site..

Issue: Treforest Industrial Estate - should the LDP allow a modest level of retail development?

Response: Small retail units already exist in a central position to serve this industrial area. Whilst there is no objection to retail development to modernise this small-scale provision, retail development on any significant scale would conflict with PPW objectives to locate retail development in centres.

Issue: Existing out-of-centre retail parks - should the LDP promote their regeneration?

Response: The out-of-centre retail parks are usually considered an unsustainable form of development, being car-dependent, generally remote from public transport nodes and poorly linked to other activities such as leisure and businesses. Nevertheless as more central sites generally are not suitable and available, they will still be needed to meet retail need for floorspace and for formats that do not fit in town centres. Therefore, whilst PPW does not provide an option to afford these out-of-centre areas the same status in retail planning as town and other centres, nor is it an option to expect these areas to run down and blight the environment. Therefore, what the LDP could encourage is the modernisation of out-of-centre retail parks, including public transport enhancements and introduction of compatible alternative uses such as offices and commercial leisure.

Issue: Employment land - should the LDP allow retail on employment land?

Response: PPW states that sites designated for industrial development should not be used for other single purposes such as retail … that could be located elsewhere. Therefore retail development on any significant scale on employment land would conflict with national policy and therefore could only be permitted as an exception to policy.

6. DRAFT LDP POLICY

Revised Strategic Policy SP 8 – Retailing and Town Centres

Proposals for new and enhanced retail provision in, ~~or adjacent to~~, town, ~~and~~ district and other defined centres will be permitted where they improve the vitality, attractiveness and viability of the centre. Outside ~~town and district~~ the defined centres and retail land allocations, proposals for new and enhanced retail provision will be subject to an assessment of retail need, and ~~phasing considerations (particularly where need is linked to large scale strategic sites) and an application of the sequential test~~.
~~Proposals~~ will only be permitted where:

a) A retail need has been demonstrated;
b) There is no suitable sequentially preferable site available;
c) They contribute to sustaining and enhancing ~~town centre~~ vitality, attractiveness and viability of town and other defined centres;
d) They reinforce cultural identity and a sense of place;
~~e) Improve the quality and attractiveness of the town.~~

Justification

Retail development includes redevelopments, extensions and conversions of land and buildings for A1 retail use.

The approach to strategic retail development remains a dual approach of meeting retail need and directing retail development to the most central available sites.

The 2007 Retail Capacity Assessment of Rhondda Cynon Taf by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners provides general evidence of retail need on which the LDP proposals are based. The requirement for applicants to demonstrate retail need only applies outside the defined centres and allocations. Where a retail need is only forecast to emerge later in the Plan period, or is dependent on related development taking place, any permission will be timed to relate development to the need.

Proposals for unallocated, out-of-centre sites where a retail need has been demonstrated will require evidence that a sequential approach to site selection has been taken. This means that potentially development sites in, or closer than the application site to, defined centres in the catchment area of the proposal have to be assessed for their suitability and availability either singly or in combination to meet the identified retail need.

Applicants also have to demonstrate favourable impact of retail proposals on the vitality**,** attractiveness and viability of affected centres. Although generally in-centre retail development can be assumed to have beneficial impact on the centre as a whole, development should be appropriate for the size of centre. Large proposals would still need to be assessed carefully for impact on the centre as a whole.

The design of proposals should reinforce cultural identity and a sense of place, to counterbalance the effects of ubiquitous building design and the corporate images of the occupiers. This can be achieved through distinctive building and landscape design, avoidance of "catalogue" street furniture, incorporation of any heritage features and suitable use of artwork.

Review of Retail Floorspace Planning Commitments 2007

Appendix C sets out details of the major retail planning commitments that were take into account in preparation of the 2007 Retail Capacity Assessment.

Definitions

All the proposed retail allocations are expressed in "net floorspace". Net floorspace includes only goods display and sales areas, checkouts, customer circulation areas and customer toilets.

"Gross floorspace" includes in addition any customer cafés, ancillary storage areas, ancillary offices and staff facilities.

"Convenience goods" are primarily food and drinks, but include other daily purchases such as newspapers, tobacco and toiletries.

"Comparison goods" cover everything else including clothes, music and furniture, where customers are more likely to want to compare alternative products before purchasing.

Area-wide Policies for Retail Development

The purpose of the retail policies is to provide sufficient floorspace to meet the retail needs of the forecast population of the Plan Area. The aims are to facilitate good quality retail provision in the most central and accessible locations and to reduce the overall need of Plan Area residents to travel for shopping. An additional aim is to ensure that all the principal towns and key settlements have thriving retail centres.

Policy RET 1 – Retail Land Allocations

Land will be made available, in addition to commitments (2007), for 7,175 m2 net floorspace for convenience goods (food) sales, and for 26,223 m2 net floorspace for

comparison goods (non-food) sales, to be constructed between 2007 and 2021.

Justification

The County Borough Retail Capacity Assessment 2007 indicates that there is a quantitative need for retail floorspace in addition to the commitments listed in Appendix C. The additional floorspace requirements are set out in Table 1 below. (The 2007-2021 figures should be treated with caution.)

Table 1: retail floorspace quantitative needs

Additional retail floorspace quantitative need m2	**2007-2011**	**2007-2016**	**2007-2021**
Convenience (food) – net	748	1,616	2,507
Comparison (non-food) – gross	0	0	31,099
Comparison (non-food) – net (70% of gross)	0	0	21,770

For comparison with table 1, table 2 below sets out the allocations proposed in the subsequent policies, which either confirm unused commitments where they have planning policy merits, or propose additional floorspace to meet planning needs in sustainable locations. In table 2, commitments are noted and excluded from the totals, so that the totals represent only proposed additional floorspace.

Table 2: retail floorspace proposed in addition to commitments 2007

	Convenience (food) net m2	**Comparison (non-food) net m2**	**Notes**
Northern Strategy Area			
Principal towns – policy RET N1			
Aberdare: Tirfounder Fields	0	Commitment	Riverside Retail Park (commitment)
Key settlements – policy RET N2			
Mountain Ash: Oxford Street	475	475	(New allocation)
Hirwaun	1,000	1,000	(New allocation)
Deleted allocations– policy RET N3			
Porth: Bus Depot	0	0	Commitment already discounted
Tonypandy: Ynys Field	0	- 3,252	De-allocation
Southern Strategy Area			
Principal towns – policy RET S1			
Pontypridd: Taff Street	0	6,500 in addition to commitment	Riverside (not permitted)
Pontypridd: Taff Street	Commitment	Commitment	Angharad Walk (commitment)
Pontypridd:	Commitment	0	With

Brown Lenox	transferred from Angharad Walk		Riverside (new allocation)
Pontypridd: Brown Lenox	0	5,500	With Angharad Walk (new allocation)
Llantrisant / Talbot Green: Cowbridge Road	3,700	19,500	Scenario 2 in NLP advice (new allocation)
Key settlements – policy RET S2			
Llanharan	1,000	1,000	(New allocation)
Tonyrefail	1,000	1,000	(New allocation)
TOTAL with Riverside	**7,175**	**26,223**	
TOTAL with Angharad Walk	**7,175**	**25,223**	
	Convenience (food) net m2	**Comparison (non-food) net m2**	

The proposed total additional convenience (food) floorspace is 7,175 m2. This is greater than the (tentative) quantitative need assessment of 2,507 m2 by 2021, but the absolute difference is not considered to be excessive and is considered to be justified in qualitative terms, as follows. About half of the additional floorspace is proposed to be in Llantrisant / Talbot Green, where a specific need to decongest existing convenience (food) provision in the principal town centre has been identified. The rest largely comprises modest proposals considered essential to strengthen the retail status of 3 of the key settlements, thereby minimising the need for local residents to travel for convenience (food) shopping.

The total additional comparison (non-food) net floorspace is 25,223 to 26,223 m2, which is greater than the tentative quantitative need assessment of 21,770 m2 by 2021. The largest proportion of the proposed additional floorspace is in Llantrisant / Talbot Green, in a development to be designed with the characteristics of a town centre, and limited in size to prevent unacceptable impacts on other principal town centres. A significant proportion of the additional comparison (non-food) floorspace is in Pontypridd, either in the in-centre Riverside scheme or at the edge of centre Brown Lenox site. Either site would enhance the retail status of the principal town centre. Another significant proportion comprises modest proposals that are considered essential to strengthen the retail status of 3 key settlements. These would meet a qualitative need to minimise travel for convenience (food) shopping. A deduction is proposed by the de-allocation of Ynys Fields, which does not meet qualitative need and reduces excess of proposals over quantitative need.

Policy RET 2 - retail centres

A. The hierarchy of retail centres in the Plan Area is defined as follows:

Northern Strategy Area:

Principal town centres

- **Aberdare**

Key settlement centres

- **Ferndale**
- **Hirwaun**
- **Mountain Ash**
- **Porth**
- **Treorchy**
- **Tonypandy**

Local and neighbourhood centres (Rhondda)

- **Gelli**
- **Maerdy**
- **Pentre (Queens)**
- **Penygraig**
- **Ton Pentre**
- **Trebanog**
- **Treherbert**
- **Tynewydd**
- **Williamstown**
- **Ynyshir**
- **Ystrad (Star)**

Local and neighbourhood centres (Cynon)

- **Aberaman**
- **Abercynon**
- **Gadlys**
- **Penrhiwceiber**
- **Trecynon**
- **Ynysybwl**

Southern Strategy Area:

Principal town centres

- **Llantrisant / Talbot Green**
- **Pontypridd**

Key settlement centres

- **Llanharan**
- **Tonyrefail**

Local and neighbourhood centres

- **Church Village (centre)**
- **Llantrisant Old Town**
- **Pontyclun**
- **Rhydyfelin**

- **Taffs Well**
- **Tonteg (Precinct)**
- **Treforest**
- **Tynant**

B. Boundaries of the centres in the retail hierarchy are defined on the Proposals Map.

C. Proposals for retail development or changes of use to retail inside the defined retail centres that would maintain or enhance a centre's position in the retail hierarchy will be permitted.

Justification

A. Retail Hierarchy

PPW / MIPPS para. 10.2.13 states that development plans should establish the strategic role to be performed by the main centres in the retail hierarchy. The centre at the head of the hierarchy for Rhondda Cynon Taf is the regional centre of Cardiff city centre. This has good road and rail access from most parts of the Plan area, and is the main destination for occasional comparison (non-food) shopping.

The principal town centres are expected to perform a sub-regional retail role, principally serving the residents of the Cynon Valley in the case of Aberdare, the Ely and Rhondda Fawr valleys in the case of Llantrisant / Talbot Green, and the Taff and Rhondda Fach valleys in the case of Pontypridd (although there are no rigid divisions). The emphasis in the principal town centres will be on a good balance between comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) shopping.

The key settlement centres are expected to act as district centres, where the emphasis will be on convenience (food) shopping with an element of day-to-day comparison (non-food) shopping.

Local and neighbourhood centres, along with neighbourhood shops outside any defined centre, will be expected to provide small-scale convenience (food) shopping.

Alongside but separate from the hierarchy of retail centres are the out-of-centre retail parks, for retail needs that cannot be met in centres, principally large-format convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) shopping.

B. Boundaries of centres

Boundaries have been defined for the centres to reflect the change of character in an area from retail and associated uses to non-retail (usually residential and sometimes Class B1 office). This has involved reviewing existing boundaries, making amendments to better indicate where the changes in character occur, deleting centres that have lost their retail character and adding centres that are substantial enough to be recognised as more than just local shops. Full details of the retail centres review is in Appendix D.

C. Retail development

Retail development in the centres is encouraged in accordance with PPW, but on a scale that accords with a centre's position in the hierarchy to avoid overdevelopment of smaller centres at the expense of the vitality, attractiveness and viability of larger centres.

Policy RET 3 – changes of use in retail centres

Within the retail centres except Aberdare and Pontypridd, only proposals for Class A1, A2, A3 or other uses that would add vitality to the centre by attracting visitors will be permitted. Within Llantrisant / Talbot Green centre and the key settlement centres, Class A3 uses will only be permitted if proposed to be open in daytime hours.

This policy recognises that A2 and A3 uses add to the vitality of a centre by attracting customers and increasing "footfall". It also recognises that other uses can have the same effect – amusement centres, clinics, health centres, laundrettes, opticians, public service offices, surgeries, for example, but applications will need to be supported by evidence, for example footfall estimates, that the proposed use would comply with this policy.

Within Llantrisant / Talbot Green and the key settlement centres, the policy seeks daytime opening hours for A3 uses to encourage cafés and restaurants that complement the retail uses. Hot food takeaway premises that are closed during the day make a limited contribution to the vitality of retail centres, therefore in the larger centres further growth of these is discouraged. Daytime opening hours would be at least from 10am to 4pm and would be secured by section 106 agreements.

Aberdare and Pontypridd retail centres are dealt with separately in policies RET N4 and RET S3 below, because they include primary shopping frontages. Primary retail frontages have only been defined for Aberdare and Pontypridd, as most other centres are too small or mixed in character to feature a significant length of predominantly retail frontage. Llantrisant / Talbot Green centre has no defined primary retail frontage, as the primary retail area here consists of large modern retail units, where pressure for changes to non-retail uses seems unlikely.

Policy RET 4 - local and neighbourhood shops

Retail development will be permitted outside defined centres, retail parks and retail allocations where:

- **The proposed net sales floorspace is small (less than 1,000 m2);**
- **Goods to be sold are mainly convenience (food) (minimum 80%);**
- **The sites are accessible on foot and by cycle;**
- **Traffic and parking impacts are acceptable for the area.**

Justification

This policy is to encourage the provision of small local and neighbourhood convenience (food) shops to serve residential and employment areas, where they can be sited without causing traffic and parking problems. Provision may be in neighbourhood centres together with small-scale service and community uses, or in accessible single sites. “Retail development” in this policy refers Class A1 floorspace provision through extension and redevelopment of existing shops as well as to new shops.

Policy RET 5 - existing out-of-centre retail parks

In out-of-centre retail parks, including the following existing retail parks:

- **Glamorgan Vale Retail Park, Llantrisant / Talbot Green**
- **Pontypridd Retail Park**
- **Midway Retail Park, including Tesco, Upper Boat,**

proposals for enhancement of non-car access, public realm enhancements, redevelopment of A1 units, changes of use to B1 offices, changes of use to commercial leisure and construction of upper floor residential development will be permitted, provided that:

- **Minimum unit sizes and limitations on categories of goods to be sold are maintained; and**
- **The proposals reinforce cultural identity and a sense of place.**

Justification

The out-of-centre retail parks are usually considered an unsustainable form of development, being car-dependent, generally remote from public transport nodes and poorly linked to other activities such as leisure and businesses. Nevertheless as more central sites generally are not suitable and available, they will still be needed to meet retail need for floorspace and for formats that do not fit well in town centres. Therefore, whilst PPW does not provide an option to afford these out-of-centre areas the same status in retail planning as town and other centres, nor is it an option to expect these areas to run down and blight the environment. Therefore, this policy is meant to encourage the modernisation and environmental improvement of out-of-centre retail parks, including public transport enhancements and introduction of compatible alternative uses such as offices and commercial leisure.

<u>Northern Strategy Area Policies</u>

Policy RET N1 - Retail Land Allocations – Northern Strategy Area principal town

Land is allocated in the following locations for shopping development:

- **Aberdare: land at Riverside Retail Park (Tirfounder Fields) for about 13,000 OR 9,660 m2 net comparison (non-food) retail floorspace designed to minimise impact on nearby town centres**

Justification

Aberdare town centre has no land available for significant expansion or redevelopment. Land at the out-of-centre

Riverside Retail Park (Tirfounder Fields) has a history from 1987 of consents for retail development. An Asda superstore, a restaurant and some smaller units have been built, but provision remains for large units for sale of specified durable goods. The site should be a retail counter-attraction to Merthyr Tydfil. As in terms of retail formats, “like competes with like”, the objective should be to provide a format that would compete with Cyfarthfa Retail Park and to avoid formats that would divert trade from the town centres of Aberdare and Mountain Ash.

Policy RET N2 - Retail Land Allocations – Northern Strategy Area key settlements

Land is allocated in the following location for shopping development of about 950 m2 net floorspace (total of convenience (food) and comparison (non-food):

- **Mountain Ash: Oxford Street**

Land is allocated in the following location for shopping development of about 2,000 m2 net floorspace (1,000 m2 convenience (food) and 1,000 m2 comparison (non-food)):

- **Hirwaun: within Strategic Site 5 land south of Hirwaun / Penywaun**

Justification

Of the 8 key settlements, Mountain Ash has the only centre with a site potentially available for redevelopment. Development of the Oxford Street site for unit shops should benefit the town and its centre environmentally, as well as socially and economically, by making appropriate use of vacant previously developed urban land.

Hirwaun has a smaller centre than its status as a key settlement deserves. Therefore, as a substantial new allocation is being made for residential development in Strategic Site 5, a retail centre comprising unit shops should be built to provide a mixture of convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) shopping.

Policy RET N3 – Deletions of retail land allocations– Northern Strategy Area

Land in the following locations is no longer considered available for retail development:

- **Porth: Porth Bus Depots site**
- **Tonypandy: Ynys Field site, Trealaw**

Justification

Both these retail land allocations in Rhondda Local Plan remain undeveloped after many years.

The Porth Bus Depots site is occupied by two bus depots, and additional land required for service access improvement off Aber-rhondda Road is not available. Therefore the site is considered to have long-term constraints and so is unsuitable and inappropriate for allocation in the LDP.

The Ynys Field site near Tonypandy (adjacent to the Lord Tonypandy) is the vacant part of a flat reclaimed site with direct access off the A4058. It is poorly located for non-car access and therefore it is considered unsuitable for retail allocation in the LDP. Qualitative and quantitative retail land needs can be met without this site.

Policy RET N4 – Aberdare retail centre

Primary retail frontages in Aberdare retail centre are defined on the Proposals Map, where proposals for Class A2 and A3 uses will only be permitted at street level if evidence indicates that Class A1 use is not viable. Proposals for other uses will only be permitted at street level if (a) they would be likely to add vitality to the centre by attracting visitors, and (b) evidence indicates that Class A1, A2 and A3 uses are not viable.

Elsewhere in Aberdare retail centre, only proposals for Class A1, A2, A3 or other uses that would be likely to add vitality to the centre by attracting visitors will be permitted.

Class A3 uses will only be permitted if proposed to be open in daytime hours.

Justification

Primary shopping frontages have been redefined to cover the parts of the centre where Class A1 uses predominate. They relate to only the street level of premises. The clustering of A1 uses is considered beneficial for the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Aberdare retail centre. Therefore, in the primary shopping frontages, the policy gives priority firstly to A1 uses and secondly to A2 and A3 uses. The test of non-viability is included for flexibility to avoid long-term vacancies that would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the primary retail frontage. Planning applications would need to be supported by evidence of a protracted history of vacancy or of lack of response to genuine efforts to market the premises for the preferred use over a significant period.

The policy seeks daytime opening hours for A3 uses to encourage cafés and restaurants that complement the retail uses. Hot food takeaway premises that are closed during the day make a limited contribution to the vitality of retail centres, therefore in the larger centres including Aberdare further growth of these is discouraged. Daytime opening hours would be from 10am to 4pm or longer, and would be secured by section 106 agreements.

Southern Strategy Area Policies

Policy RET S1 - Retail Land Allocations – Southern Strategy Area principal towns

Land is allocated in the following central location for shopping development of either comparison (non-food)

floorspace or a mixture of comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) floorspace:

- **Pontypridd: land in Taff Street (Precinct and Gas Road car park sites), as part of a mixed-use scheme that should include between 18,000 and 23,000 m2 net retail floorspace and active riverside frontage, and may include A3 food and drink uses, B1 offices, C1 residential and C3 hotel.**

Land is allocated in the following out-of-centre locations for shopping development:

- **Pontypridd: land adjoining Pontypridd Retail Park (Brown Lenox), for between about 3,500 and 5,500 m2 net floorspace, either comparison (non-food) or convenience (food) or a mixture, subject to no detriment to the redevelopment of the in-centre Gas Road / Precinct site**

- **Llantrisant / Talbot Green: land in Cowbridge Road south of A473 Talbot Green bypass (part of SS 7 Mwyndy / Talbot Green), for comparison (non-food) floorspace (maximum 19,500 m2 net; about half of which to be in units of less than 500 m2) (70% of gross) and convenience (food) floorspace (maximum 3,700 m2 net), as part of a new town centre incorporating commercial and civic uses and public transport facilities**

Justification

Pontypridd principal town centre includes underused land at Gas Road and the run-down Taff Vale Precinct. Lying between Taff Street and the river Taff, the site is an opportunity for major retail-led mixed-use redevelopment utilising the amenity advantage of the riverside location. Planning permission has been granted for a scheme anchored by a supermarket (Angharad Walk, about 18,000 m2 net sales floorspace). An alternative scheme anchored by a department store is expected to receive planning permission after a resolution to grant planning permission was made in 2007 (Riverside, about 21,000 m2 net sales floorspace). Depending on whether the Angharad Walk or the Riverside scheme proceeds, derelict brownfield land adjoining Pontypridd Retail Park (Brown Lenox site) will be available for either comparison (non-food) or convenience (food) shopping development.

Land adjoining Pontypridd Retail Park (Brown Lenox) is considered to be an accessible location for the wider town, and therefore a sequentially preferable site for retail development that cannot locate in the town centre. A foodstore of 3,354 m2 net convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) floorspace has been refused on this site, as there was insufficient retail need to support the convenience (food) stores proposed on both the in-centre Gas Road / Precinct site and the Brown Lenox site [03/0625]. There are undetermined proposals for 5,574 m2 net comparison (non-food) retail floorspace on the same site [07/1554]. It is vital that development here does not frustrate the retail development of the town centre site.

Llantrisant / Talbot Green principal town centre comprises the village centre in Talbot Road and Talbot Green Retail Park, including Tesco Extra. Although technically in-centre, Talbot Green Retail Park has the characteristics of a car-based out-of-centre retail park. There is no further land available in the centre either to decongest it or to cater for future retail need in the area. Therefore, land in Cowbridge Road south of A473 Talbot Green bypass is proposed to be developed with a mixture of uses with public transport facilities in order to create a new town centre. The development should complement the existing centre by providing a facility more akin to a town centre to serve this area. The net floorspace limits specified are based on advice on the maximum level of development that could take place without unacceptable impact on existing centres. The figures could be reduced as a result of detailed assessment of the proposed site, or if other retail commitments emerge elsewhere.

Policy RET S2 - Retail Land Allocations – Southern Strategy Area key settlements

Land is allocated in the following locations for shopping development of about 2,000 m2 net floorspace (1,000 m2 convenience (food) and 1,000 m2 comparison (non-food)) at each site:

- **Llanharan: within Strategic Site 8 site of former OCC site, Llanilid**
- **Tonyrefail: east of Mill Street**

Justification

Llanharan and Tonyrefail have smaller centres than their status as key settlements deserves. Therefore, where substantial new allocations are being made for residential development, retail centres comprising unit shops should be built to provide a mixture of convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) shopping.

Policy RET S3 – Pontypridd retail centre

Primary retail frontages in Pontypridd retail centre are defined on the Proposals Map, where proposals for Class A2 and A3 uses will only be permitted at street level if evidence indicates that Class A1 use is not viable. Proposals for other uses will only be permitted at street level if (a) they would be likely to add vitality to the centre by attracting visitors, and (b) evidence indicates that Class A1, A2 and A3 uses are not viable.

Elsewhere in Pontypridd retail centre, only proposals for Class A1, A2, A3 or other uses that would be likely to add vitality to the centre by attracting visitors will be permitted.

Class A3 uses will only be permitted if proposed to be open in daytime hours.

Justification

Primary shopping frontages have been defined to cover the parts of the centre where Class A1 uses predominate. They relate to only the street level of premises. The clustering of A1 uses is considered beneficial for the vitality, viability and attractiveness of Pontypridd retail centre. Therefore, in the primary shopping frontages, the policy gives priority firstly to A1 uses and secondly to A2 and A3 uses. The test of non-viability is included for flexibility to avoid long-term vacancies that would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the primary retail frontage. Planning applications would need to be supported by evidence of a protracted history of vacancy or of lack of response to genuine efforts to market the premises for the preferred use over a significant period.

The policy seeks daytime opening hours for A3 uses to encourage cafés and restaurants that complement the retail uses. The so-called “café quarter” in the Market Street area is considered to be a successful element in increasing the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre. Hot food takeaway premises that are closed during the day make a limited contribution to the vitality of retail centres, therefore in the larger centres including Pontypridd further growth of these is discouraged. Daytime opening hours would be from 10am to 4pm or longer, and would be secured by section 106 agreements.

7. FURTHER ADVICE

If you require any further advice or assistance in respect this or other LDP documents or wish to be placed on the Council’s consultation database please contact a member of the Local Development Plan Team at:

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Email: LDP@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk

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Appendices

Appendix:
A – overview of UK retail sector in 2007
B – Review of retail floorspace commitments 2007
C – Boundary Review of retail centres

Appendix A

Overview of UK retail sector in 2007

Retailing is becoming a far more competitive market in which to operate. There are lots of reasons for this, many of them relating to consumers and how they are changing. The majority of consumers today own much more than generations before them, therefore if they have most of what they already need, persuading them to buy additional products becomes increasingly difficult, especially as consumers are becoming slightly jaded and feel bored with much of the shopping process. This jaded feeling is partly a function of not needing to shop as much but is also related to a lack of innovation on the part of many retailers and shopping places which gives rise to a “been there done that” feel about shopping in general. There is much debate over the monotony of the UK retail scene, with many city centre and shopping schemes offering the same names and so there are opportunities for new schemes to design alternatives, more leisure offer, integrating spaces and dwell time with smaller specialist and local retailers adding different focus points and draws.

Future trends include alternatives being integrated into the consumer process, issues such as wellness and well-being, where consumers are more interested in buying functional products which improve their health are becoming more prevalent and will do so in the future. Equally there is a greater awareness of ethical and environmental concerns and any new shopping place needs to take these issues on board in its design and letting policy. A vibrant tenant mix, combined with a good secure base income will lead to enhanced performance over time as customers and retailers welcome schemes with a variety of international, national, regional and local independent occupiers.

The pressure of time on consumers is a major problem for many in today’s society. As an activity retailing is not immune from this trend, with convenience (food) and ease being key watchwords for consumers. For retailing all these problem areas are combined with supply side factors such as a more intense focus on price, a deflationary retail environment, greater choice for consumers because of the addition of evermore retail space and the entry of grocers into the non-food market. Retailers need to ensure they capture the market trends and shopping places need to be flexible enough to enable the retailers to perform, which in turn creates a vibrant and positive physical environment.

Despite paying lip service to the customer, retailers and shopping centres/shopping places, including town centres, have been quite bad at truly understanding consumers and putting them at the heart of their business. An increased focus on the consumer and how different consumer segments are changing is key to meeting the objective of becoming more consumer-centric. A potential way of segmenting consumers is to look at the consumer lifecycle. That is how people at different life stages shop, what they shop for and how they will change over the next 10 years.

Over the next 10 years, overall retail consumer spend will grow by an annual average of 3.3%. Over 1990 to 2004 this average was 4.9%, a significant decrease is expected going forward in terms of retail spend, although having said that, retail will remain a growth sector within the economy. In the next 10 years over two thirds of the retail spend in the UK will be by consumers aged over 45. This has important implications for retailers and shopping places who must adapt their offer to this increasing trend, but this poses some interesting issues. The older consumers of the future will have a younger mindset with more demanding requirements and retail places will need to cater for these issues. At the other end of the spectrum, younger family groupings will also become more prevalent given that when people are setting up homes and establishing families their retail spend is generally higher and is anticipated to account for approximately 18% of retail growth over the next 10 years. Many shoppers in this group will have families so making the shopping process easy for them and integrating family activities will be extremely important.

There has been a major shift in the importance of new retail development towards town centres over the last 10 years, partly as a result of confidence to invest in town and city centres driven by government. There have been a number of interesting trends in retail offer. Well known trends include the increase in grocery format size made possible by moves to out of town locations and the subsequent waves of re entry of the grocery formats into city centres with new smaller sizes.

A less well known trend is what has been happening in the non food retailing sector, where there has been a shift towards long term growth, but a step change in format sizes. Many retailers are choosing to introduce larger formats offering more authoritative ranges and larger destination pull. Having said that, recent retailer search for the most effective balance and range of floor space productivity has resulted in the down sizing of some very large formats. Therefore new schemes will need to cater for relatively large stores, but at the same time provide a degree of flexibility if retailers continue to review unit sizes.

Any retail place should also cater for specialist retailers who add vitality to any scheme, but subject to specific consideration to the level of rents that these operators can afford. The specialist operator is not inexhaustible given the growth of out of town general merchandisers and the expansion of e-commerce, which continues to make trading conditions for specialist business models extremely hard.

The challenge to retail shopping centres and retail places therefore, to create and ensure thriving centres, is to provide a quality of experience that sets the place apart from competing places with safety, convenience (food) and comfort to rival that of the retail warehouse park and out of town mall. The consumer must be enticed by a journey above and beyond that of a simple shopping outlet, an offer to draw and retain the custom of the local population, but also to attract visitors from beyond the catchment.

The most successful developments will:

- Create an identity, strengthen the retail offer and the quality and range of activities, enhancing the environmental quality and ensuring a high degree of accessibility. The retail offer, whilst focused, should incorporate a varied offer attractive to several consumer groups whilst the mixture of uses will see increased residential development and enhanced leisure provision. There will be access to simple information areas, clear directions, strategies and clustering of units, use of modern technology-potentially wireless networks.

- Accommodate those businesses that need to adopt a larger format to sustain their profitability and create destination pull.

- Recognise the richness of variety represented by smaller retail businesses, which choose not to move into the mainstream but nevertheless remain attractive tenants. Accepting that some business models developed to counter e-commerce put a premium on high levels of experience and service in store which comes at a cost, but which add to the creativity and differentiate a place.

- Clustering of specific retailers will ensure that the consumer is presented with a focussed offer, suitable for all tastes.

- Consider the retail spend for the future; in that many shoppers will be young families, many will be over the age of 45 and therefore creating family orientated A3 uses within safe and convenient environments will encourage visits to the destination and act as a pull for the remainder of the town.

Spending on retail goods has been strong over the past decade, particularly spending on non-food or so called comparison (non-food) goods. In part, this has been due to a generally benign economic climate coupled with total household incomes and the goods and services bought by UK households, which have also seen strong growth. Increased spending on comparison (non-food) goods has been helped by lower prices, a result of the introduction of new technology and the flood of imports from cheaper locations including China and other parts of the Far East. There is predicted to be a drop in the growth on retail spending, especially in comparison (non-food) goods, due to:

- The upsurge in borrowing and run down of savings seen over the past ten years is unlikely to be sustainable.
- Consumer debt compared to income has reached levels which has left many consumers feeling increasingly uncomfortable.
- A surge in house prices compared with incomes has promoted equity withdrawal to finance consumer spending, which cannot persist at the same rate as it has done over the past decade.
- Low high street prices caused by the flood of goods imported from the Far East is coming to an end. China is now a much more developed economy seeking to raise living standards rather than to export at any cost and there is even the possibility of the revaluation of the Chinese currency which could hold back any further falls in imported good prices.
- The forecast annual average increase in the volume of spending on comparison (non-food) goods of 4.3% a year between 2006 and 2015 which is much less than the annual increase of 7.4% recorded over the last decade and is even less than the 40 year average of 4.9% often used in retail planning enquiries.

In our opinion these statistics reinforce the requirement for a mix of occupiers and uses within retail schemes, being able to focus on certain categories of consumer including the ageing population together with younger families and also incorporate design issues to make the centres more convenient to these important groups. There are some early wins with simple centre management including more and better seating and clearer signage, enhanced food and leisure offer and cleaner and safer car parks. There is also scope for putting on events and entertainment and taking positive action on environmental issues all of which help to differentiate from the competition.

There is increased competition to the town centre from the out of town market, both food and non-food, with designer outlet centres, regional malls, retail warehouse parks and supermarkets. The rise of the supermarket and the issues or otherwise they pose to the traditional town centre is well documented and perhaps misunderstood. Supermarkets are key employers, providers of convenient retail methods, which the population now expects, and within town centres provide a degree of secondary spending which would otherwise be lost to the town.

The development of supermarkets will account for a significant proportion of all new retail floor space over the next 10 years. An increase in home ware and fashion goods produces a greater balance between comparison (non-food) and convenience (food) shopping. While such change in the balance of goods sold in supermarkets is already appearing on the ground, the future is likely to see supermarkets likened to the hypermarket format as seen outside the UK, Carrefour in Europe for example. The internal concessions that will appear will dramatically widen the range of products available to the consumer. It is anticipated that the supermarkets will begin to branch into higher end market products in some locations. In addition we have already seen other concepts including coffee shops, and everyday services including photographic, dry cleaning, pharmacy and home products. The new out of town hypermarket will be the greatest high street competitor, providing all shopping under a single roof that is service rich and value for money. The quality of the experience will determine the degree to which the hypermarket competes with the town centre, where experience is provided through identity, mix of uses and leisure offer.

In light of the sustainability agenda and the requirement for maximising the use of land, entirely new supermarkets are unlikely to be stand-alone. Newly developed supermarkets are likely to be within mixed-use development sites and some will see the inclusion of residential development.

Appendix B

Review of Retail Floorspace Planning Commitments 2007

The following table lists major retail planning commitments that were taken into account in the 2007 Retail Capacity Assessment. All had planning permission in 2007. Although the Ynys Field planning permission expired in 2007, it remains in the list as an adopted Local Plan allocation for bulky comparison (non-food) goods retailing. The Porth bus depots site is excluded from this list already as a constrained site.

Table C1: retail floorspace commitments 2007

Area	**Site**	**Convenience (food) Net m2**	**Comparison (non-food) Net m2**
Aberdare (Gadlys)	Tesco extension	880	732
Aberdare (Aberaman)	Tirfounder Fields non-food stores	-	13,006
Porth (Cymmer)	Unigate depot adj Lidl	932	732
Tonypandy (Llwynypia)	Asda store, Hutchings site	1,672	1,115
Tonypandy (Trealaw)	Ynys Field adj Lord Tonypandy	-	2,800
Northern Strategy Area total commitments 2007		**3,484**	**18,385**
Pontypridd (centre)	Food store, Angharad Walk	3,441	1,475
Pontypridd (centre)	Unit shops, Angharad Walk	-	13,036
Pontypridd (Upper Boat)	Tesco extension	610	192
Southern Strategy Area total commitments 2007		**4,051**	**14,703**
Plan Area retail commitments 2007		**7,535**	**33,088**
Effect of possible new permissions at Tirfounder Fields [98/4647] and in Pontypridd centre [06/1539]		4,094	36,324

The Tesco extension at Gadlys, Aberdare was granted full permission on 31/08/06 [05/1690], so is valid until 2011. The Committee report states that the extension is for 2,498 m2 (gross): 880 m2 net floorspace is for convenience (food) and 732 m2 for comparison (non-food) goods (total net extension 1,612 m2).

The Asda mezzanine floor at Aberaman, Aberdare was granted full permission on 11/07/06 [05/1394]. As it has been implemented, it is no longer regarded as a commitment. The Committee report stated that the extension would be 1,152 m2. The net sales area of the extended store would be 4,873 m2, of which the maximum comparison (non-food) goods floorspace would be 2,287 m2. Condition 3 of the permission set both these figures as maxima.

The Tirfounder Fields non-food stores next to Asda at Aberaman, Aberdare were originally granted outline permission on 18/12/89 [87/0244] (later renewed). The 6 units numbered 2 to 7 on the illustrative layout totalled 175,000 ft2 or 16,257 m2 gross. At say, 80% the net floorspace would be 13,006 m2. Reserved matters were approved on 19/02/96 [93/0428] in which the 6 units numbered 1 to 5 (sic) totalled the same as in the outline illustrative layout. (A further reserved matters application was submitted in 1998 [98/4647] showing only 130,000 ft2 or 12,077 m2 gross (say 9,661 m2 net) in 10 units, but this application remains undetermined at March 2008). The Asda store was built under a further reserved matters approval [98/4318, dated 16/09/98], which is assumed to have prevented the outline permission from lapsing. Therefore the commitment is based on the outline permission and the illustrative layout confirmed in the 1996 approval of reserved matters. (Should the outstanding application for approval of reserved matters be approved, the net comparison (non-food) floorspace commitment would have to be reduced by 3,345 m2.)

At the former Unigate Depot site in Cymmer Road, Porth, a Lidl store opened in 2006 [04/2380]. The building has a gross floorspace area of 1,621 m2, of which 1,286 m2 (79%) is the net retail sales area. On adjoining land ("Rhondda Shopping Centre"), there is outline permission for retail development of 2,080 m2 gross, likely to comprise a Netto foodstore (1,163 m2 gross) and a bargain store (915 m2 gross) [06/0036]. The permission is dated 06/10/06 and is valid until 2009. At say 80%, the net figures would be 930 m2 convenience (food) and 732 m2 comparison (non-food).

Porth Bus Depot is allocated in Rhondda Local Plan for retail development. The most recent application, for a foodstore of 2,374 m2 net sales floorspace, was withdrawn in 2006 [05/0210]. The site is now regarded as constrained and therefore no longer a commitment.

At the Hutchings Garage site, Llwynypia, north of Tonypandy, full planning permission was granted on 21/12/06 [06/1173] for a foodstore for Asda of 5,240 m2 gross and a net sales floorspace of 2,780 m2. Condition 2 on the permission states that the net sales area (excluding checkouts, customer circulation, cafe, customer toilets, staff facilities, warehousing and offices) of the foodstore within the development hereby permitted shall not exceed 2,787 m2 (comprising 1,672 m2 for convenience (food) goods and 1,115 m2 for comparison (non-food) goods). Although the store is open and trading, it was under construction in 2007, and therefore technically still counts as a commitment.

At Ynys Field, Trealaw, between Tonypandy and Porth, land is allocated in Rhondda Local Plan for bulky goods comparison (non-food) retail development. Full planning permission for bulky goods retailing was granted in 1997

[96/6591] and renewed in 2002 [01/6489]. The gross floorspace was 4,645 m2; the net figure is unknown, but at 70% would have been 3,252 m2. This permission expired on 28/02/2007. There is a currently undetermined planning application for a Tesco foodstore of 3,412 m2 gross floorspace, including 1,948 m2 net sales area (1,402 m2 convenience (food) plus 546 m2 comparison (non-food)). For the purpose of this exercise, the net floorspace capacity of the site for the allocated use (bulky comparison (non-food) goods sales) is assumed to be 3,252 m2.

The Angharad Walk scheme in central Pontypridd was granted full planning permission on 09/12/04 [02/0919] and is valid until 2009. The Committee report states that the foodstore gross floorspace is 6,987 m2 and that the non-food shops and A3 outlets total 15,336 m2 (assumed to be a gross figure). The A3 floorspace is unknown. The RPS Retail Assessment (2003) estimates the net floorspace of the foodstore as 4,916 m2, but assumes that this is all convenience (food). In practice 70% or 3,441 m2 is likely to be net convenience (food) and 30% or 1,475 m2 net comparison (non-food) floorspace. The RPS report does not estimate the net floorspace of the non-food shops: at 85% the figure would be 13,036 m2. The total net retail floorspace of the approved Angharad Walk scheme would be 17,952 m2.

The alternative Riverside scheme in central Pontypridd was subject to a resolution to grant planning permission in 2007 [06/1539], but does not have planning permission (March 2008). The class A1 (retail) and Class A2 (financial & professional services) gross floorspace would be 24,814 m2, plus class A3 (restaurants/bars) totalling 1,939 m2. Net floorspaces are not known, but at 85% the A1 and A2 net floorspace would be 21,092 m2. All the A1 retail floorspace would be comparison (non-food) floorspace. The total A1, A2 and A3 floorspace would be 28% more than the permitted Angharad Walk scheme. (If and when the Riverside scheme both (a) has planning permission, and (b) takes precedence over the Angharad Walk scheme, the net convenience (food) floorspace commitment would have to be reduced by 3,441 m2 and the net comparison (non-food) floorspace commitment increased by 6,581 m2.)

The Tesco store at Upper Boat has full permission that permits the net sales and circulation area to increase from 4,912 m2 by 1,127 m2 to 6,039 m2 [02/1930, dated 15/08/03]. Excluding circulation, the net sales area was permitted to increase from 4,060 m2 by 802 m2 to 4,862 m2. A condition states that not more than 1,165 m2 of the building as extended shall be used for the sale of goods other than food, drink, newspapers and magazines, health and beauty products, household convenience (food) goods and pharmaceuticals. The condition does not say whether the 1,165 m2 is gross or net, so it assumed to be net sales floorspace. This represents 24% of the total net sales floorspace. Accordingly, the 802 m2 extension is assumed to be 610 m2 for convenience (food) sales and 192 m2 for comparison (non-food). This permission has not been implemented and is valid until 2008. A mezzanine floor may be installed instead, which would not require planning permission.

Appendix C

Review of Retail Centres

A. Centre Boundaries

The boundaries of 59 existing and potential retail centres in Rhondda Cynon Taf have been reviewed. Most have an existing boundary designated in an adopted Local Plan. Despite policies to encourage retail development and to control changes of use, in areas of long-term depopulation some of the smaller designated areas have either partially or wholly lost their retail character. The aim of the review is to propose boundaries that better reflect the current situation on the ground. Where there are shops that are or have become too few or too scattered to form a recognisable retail area, they will be regarded as neighbourhood shops with a useful role to play at that level.

In 2003 consultants Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners made brief "health checks" of many of the centres. Where available, their assessment is included below.

Most of these centres have a Commercial Improvement Zone or Commercial Improvement Area designation for Commercial Improvement Grant purposes. The boundaries for grant purposes are widely drawn to include scattered and isolated commercial premises, and are therefore fundamentally different from the planning boundaries that aim to define retail centres by the strength of their retail character.

The list below summarises the outcomes described in detail further below. The possible outcomes are:

- Extension – where an area of retail character has been found on the edge of an existing retail area [3 cases]
- Reduction – exclusion of a residential area or other area of non-retail character from an existing retail area [19 cases]
- Minor amendment – extensions and reductions on a small scale [10 cases]
- Deletion – an existing retail area that no longer displays retail character [17 cases]
- No designation – an area examined for possible designation but rejected as too small [6 cases]
- New designation – an area examined for possible designation and found to have sufficient retail character to justify designation [3 cases].

The net effect of the review would be to reduce the number of designated retail centres in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 50 to 38 (24% reduction).

B. Primary retail frontages

Under existing Local Plans, Pontypridd has "primary shopping frontages" where A1 and A2 uses are permitted. Aberdare and Mountain Ash have "primary shopping areas" where A2 and A3 uses are permitted in limited circumstances. The review includes a check on these.

Centre	**Summary of review outcome**

Northern Strategy Area:

Principal town retail centres [1]

Aberdare	Minor amendments to centre Reduction of primary shopping area

Key settlement retail centres [6]

Ferndale	Reduction
Hirwaun	Reduction
Mountain Ash	Extensions to centre Deletion of primary shopping area
Porth	Reductions and amendments
Treorchy	Minor amendments
Tonypandy	Minor amendments

Local and neighbourhood centres:
Rhondda Valleys [23, all existing, to become 11]

Clydach Vale (Bush)	Deletion
Clydach Vale (Central)	Deletion
Clydach Vale (Court Street)	Deletion
Cwm Parc (Co-op House)	Deletion
Cwm Parc (Parc)	Deletion
Cymmer	Deletion
Gelli	Reduction
Maerdy	Reduction
Pentre (Queens)	Reduction
Pentre (Pentre Motors)	Deletion
Pentre (Ystrad Road)	Deletion
Penygraig	Minor amendment
Pontygwaith	Deletion
Ton Pentre	Minor amendment
Trebanog	Minor amendment
Trehafod	Deletion
Treherbert	Reduction
Tylorstown	Deletion
Tynewydd	Reduction
Williamstown	Reduction
Ynyshir	Reduction
Ystrad (Star)	Reduction
Ystrad (William Street)	Deletion

Local and neighbourhood centres:
Cynon Valley [13, of which 7 existing, to become 6]

Aberaman	Reduction & Extension
Abercwmboi	No designation
Abercynon	Reduction
Cwmaman	Deletion
Gadlys	Reduction
Godreaman	No designation
Miskin	No designation

Penrhiwceiber	Reduction
Penywaun	No designation
Trecynon	Minor amendment
Tynte	No designation
Ynysboeth	No designation
Ynysybwl	Reduction

Southern Strategy Area:

Principal town retail centres [2]

Llantrisant / Talbot Green	Minor amendments to centre No primary shopping frontages existing or proposed
Pontypridd	Extensions to centre No change to primary shopping frontages

Key settlement retail centres [2]

Llanharan	No change
Tonyrefail	Minor amendments

Local and neighbourhood centres:
[12, of which 9 existing, to become 8]

Church Village (centre)	Reduction
Church Village (Garth Olwg)	Deletion
Gilfach Goch (Garden Village)	Deletion
Gilfach Goch (High Street)	Deletion
Llantrisant Old Town	New designation
Pontyclun	Amendments
Rhydyfelin	New designation
Taffs Well	Reduction
Tonteg (Precinct)	Minor amendment
Tonteg (traffic lights)	Deletion
Treforest	Reduction
Tynant	New designation

Review of Retail Centres:

Northern Strategy Area

Principal Town Centres

Aberdare

Current Status: Major town centre (sub-regional centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; shopping centre (with primary and secondary shopping areas) in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Aberdare is the main town centre in the Cynon Valley. It is approximately 10 miles north of Pontypridd. Aberdare is a compact centre and, unlike many centres in Rhondda Cynon Taf, does not have a linear form. Aberdare town centre performs a number of important functions:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a range of convenience (food) stores including a number of national retailers;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a limited range of comparison (non-food) shops including a number of major national retailers;
- Entertainment and leisure – a limited range of entertainment and leisure facilities including a number of social clubs, public houses and cafés; and
- Services – including hairdressers, estate agents, travel agents and a range of professional services.

Comments: the retail uses are concentrated in Canon Street, Commercial Street, Victoria Square, Cardiff Street and numerous side streets together with the market. The area has received considerable investment in environmental improvements. The only part of the existing shopping area that lacks retail character is the vicinity of the police station. Where the retail centre merges with the residential area off Whitcombe Street, small adjustments would be appropriate.

Conclusions: Aberdare principal town retail centre should be based on the existing shopping area, but excluding 9-15 Cross Street, the police station and the club (Elliotts) in Wind Street. In Dean Street, 20 and 45 should be excluded and 43a included in the retail area.

Primary Shopping Area: in 2006 there were 93 premises in the primary shopping area comprising Commercial Street and parts of Canon Street, Whitcombe Street, Victoria Square and Cardiff Street. Of these, 60 or 65% were in A1 use. If the area were to be restricted to Commercial Street and those parts of Canon Street, Whitcombe Street, Victoria Square and Cardiff Street with a higher proportion of A1 units, there would be 69 premises in the primary shopping area of which 49 or 71% were in A1 use. It is considered useful to concentrate the primary shopping area on those frontages where the average A1 proportion exceeds two-thirds, in order to be clear that these areas are predominantly Class A1 retail in character. Therefore the Aberdare primary shopping area should be reduced by excluding 53 to 65 Cardiff Street, 14 to 18 Victoria Square and 14 to 22 Canon Street.

Review of Retail Centres:

Northern Strategy Area

Key Settlement Centres

Ferndale

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Ferndale is one of the smaller shopping centres within Rhondda Cynon Taff. It is located in the Rhondda valley and is approximately 6 miles north of Pontypridd and 5 miles south of Aberdare. Ferndale centre provides local shops and services and appears to be well used with a range of shops and services such as a library and doctor's surgery.
Ferndale performs the following roles:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a small selection of convenience (food) shops including a Co-operative and a Spar plus other independent retailers;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a limited range of comparison (non-food) shops including independent shops selling shoes, children's clothing and cards. The majority of the comparison (non-food) retail shops are occupied by local independent traders;
- Eating/drinking establishments – including Working Men' clubs, cafes and public houses; and
- Services – a range of service facilities including banks, estate agents and hairdressers.

Comments: Ferndale retail zone is substantial in the Northern Strategy Area context and fronts The Strand, High Street and a section of Dyffryn Street. There is a variation in character, from strongly retail in High Street north from Cross Lake Street, to residential with scattered shops and other uses in High Street south of Cross Lake Street and Dyffryn Street. The east side of High Street has a mixture of uses. The mainly residential sections can be excluded from the retail zone. The "east side" contains a retail cluster that ought to be retained in the zone.

Conclusions: Ferndale key settlement retail centre should be based on the existing retail zone, but only comprising 21-52a High Street, The Strand and 59-69 High Street.

Hirwaun

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan. This area mainly fronts High Street and part of Cross Street and Lower Cross Street.

Consultant's Comments: Centre is in poor condition. It is focussed on a number of village shops (bakers, children's wear and Post Office). There are other shops, away from the centre, dotted around the town.

Comments: Although Hirwaun is defined as a key settlement, its retail centre is small. High Street south of the clock tower retains its retail character, but High Street west of the clock tower, Cross Street and Lower Cross Street do not have sufficient retail character to justify their continued inclusion in any retail designation. The scattered shops include a small supermarket in Tramway, but there is no cluster here to justify a retail designation. There is no obvious land on which to expand the existing centre, a fact is recognised in the proposed Retail Land Allocations for outside key settlement centres, where land within Strategic Site 5 land south of Hirwaun / Penywaun is allocated for shopping development of about 2,000 m2 net floorspace (total of convenience (food) and comparison (non-food)).

Conclusions: the existing centre of Hirwaun, reduced to comprise 31-41 High Street, the library and 70a-78a High Street, should be carried forward as a secondary centre for the key settlement.

Mountain Ash

Current Status: Major town centre (district centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; shopping centre (with primary and secondary shopping areas) in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan. This centre has received considerable investment in environmental improvements.

Consultant’s Comments: Mountain Ash is located within the Cynon Valley between Aberdare and Pontypridd on the B4275; it is approximately 8 miles north of Pontypridd. The shopping area is linear in form and extends approximately 400 metres. Mountain Ash performs a number of roles:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a range of convenience (food) retail facilities including three national retailers;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a limited range of comparison (non-food) shops with representation in most goods categories. The majority of the comparison (non-food) retail shops are occupied by local independent traders;
- Eating/drinking establishments – including cafés and public houses; and
- Services – a range of low order service facilities including banks, estate agents, solicitors and hairdressers.

Comments: the existing shopping area boundary is unusually tightly defined, excluding commercial properties in Commercial Street and the lower end of Oxford Street. Although Commercial Street includes residential properties, it also includes a supermarket and has sufficient retail character to include it in the centre boundary. Similarly lower Oxford Street should be included.

Conclusions: Mountain Ash key settlement retail centre should be defined as the existing shopping area, plus 24 to 60 and 49 to 63 Commercial Street, Oxford Buildings and 71 to 81 Oxford Street.

Primary Shopping Area: in 2006 there were 9 premises in the primary shopping area comprising 18 to 27 Oxford Street. Of these, 6 or 67% were in A1 use. It is considered that the primary shopping area is too small to have a significant bearing on the vitality, attractiveness and viability of Mountain Ash as a key settlement centre. Primary shopping areas are more suited to the larger principal town centres. Therefore the Mountain Ash primary shopping area should not be carried forward.

Porth

Current Status: Major town centre (district centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Porth is a main centre within the Rhondda Valley, approximately 3 miles north west of Pontypridd. The shopping area is approximately 400 metres in length and is linear in form. Porth performs a number of important roles:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a range of convenience (food) stores including a number of national retailers and a large Co-op Supermarket at the edge of the centre;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a limited range of comparison (non-food) shops, including some national retailers;
- Entertainment and leisure – a limited range of entertainment and leisure facilities including a Bingo and Social Club, cafés and public houses; and
- Services – including hairdressers, estate agents, travel agents and a limited range of professional services.

Comments: the existing retail zone is defined in a fragmented way, with 5 separate areas for Pontypridd Road / Hannah Street / Station Road, the Co-operative store, Porth Street, Rheola Road and Tynewydd Square. Hannah Street remains the core of the centre augmented by the Co-operative store. In Pontypridd Road and Jenkin Street, there is no need to include residential properties, whereas it would be logical to include shops at 42 to 44 Pontypridd Road and the library opposite. Station Street and 64-78 Pontypridd Road are parts that suffer from vacancies, but in perception, they remain integral parts of the centre. In Porth Street by the police station there are some scattered shops detached from the core of the centre and some houses, but this part still has retail character. The retail unit in Rheola Road has been demolished and replaced with a car park. The Tynewydd Square part has mostly A3 and residential uses, clearly separated from the core area by the imposing relief road bridge, so that the retail character is not strong here.

Conclusions: Porth key settlement retail centre should be defined as Hannah Street, Pontypridd Road (35-44, Library to 54 and 64-78), the Co-operative store, Station Street and Porth Street (excluding cottages to the rear).

Treorchy

Current Status: Major town centre (district centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Treorchy is located in the Rhondda Fawr and lies on the A4061, approximately 9 miles north west of Pontypridd. The shopping area is linear in form, extending for approximately 700 metres. The centre is relatively small as is limited to one main shopping frontage. Treorchy serves a number of key roles:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a range of convenience (food) facilities including national multiple retailers as well as local shops and the market;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a small selection of comparison (non-food) shops;
- Entertainment and leisure – a cinema and a number of public houses; and
- Services – a range of service outlets including banks, building societies, hairdressers and professional services.

Comments: The existing retail zone fronts High Street and Bute Street, with an extension to include the Co-operative store. The area retains a strong retail character as far as Clark Street. Northwest of Clark Street, the area is mixed in character but is still readily perceived as an integral part of the retail zone. The Noddfa Day Centre and Cardiff Arms Hotel are unnecessarily excluded from the present retail zone.

Conclusions: Treorchy key settlement retail centre should be based on the existing retail zone, subject to inclusion of the Noddfa Day Centre and Cardiff Arms Hotel.

Tonypandy

Current Status: Major town centre (district centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant’s Comments: Tonypandy is located in the Rhondda Fawr and is approximately 6 miles north west of Pontypridd. The main shopping area is linear and extends approximately 1,000 metres from north to south. Tonypandy performs a number of important roles:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a limited range of convenience (food) retailing facilities, although there are two supermarkets operated by national retailers;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a reasonable range of comparison (non-food) retail facilities with representation in most goods categories. Tonypandy also benefits from the presence of a number of national retailers;
- Entertainment and leisure – a reasonable range of leisure facilities including a number of pubs, cafés, takeaways and a snooker hall; and
- Services – a range of services including banks, solicitors, travel agents, estate agents and hairdressers.

Comments: the core of the retail centre lies along the partly pedestrianised Dunraven Street, although residential elements at the rear of shops are included. The bend at Pandy Bridge and the A4119 bridge separates out the smaller Pandy Square area, but this still remains part of the core area and could reasonably be extended to enclose the Job Centre Plus premises and the Aldi store. At the south end of Dunraven Street, the frontage south of Trinity Road (including the Plaza cinema site, an allocated housing site) has no retail element. The area south of Bridge Street is mixed in character; the mostly residential parts can be excluded.

Conclusions: Tonypandy key settlement retail centre should be based on the existing retail zone with the addition of Job Centre Plus, the Aldi store and the exclusion of Post Office Row, River View, the old Post Office site, Dunraven Street south of Trinity Road, 73-77 Dunraven Street and Taliesin.

Review of Retail Centres:

Northern Strategy Area

Local and Neighbourhood Centres

Rhondda Valleys

Clydach Vale (Bush)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This is a tiny designation in part of a terrace of houses in Clydach Road opposite the Bush Hotel. Only one small shop remains.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Clydach Vale (Central)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This designation comprises one terrace of houses in Clydach Road opposite the Central Hotel. Only one shop remains in the zone and one next to it.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Clydach Vale (Court Street)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This designation comprises one terrace of houses in Court Street opposite the post office. Only one shop and one takeaway remain in the zone.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Cwm Parc (Co-op House)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This small zone fronts Park Road in a residential area. The few existing commercial premises are too scattered to be considered a cluster.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Cwm Parc (Parc)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This small zone fronts the south side of Park Road between the Institute and the Parc Hotel. It is primarily residential in character. The few existing commercial premises are too scattered to be considered a significant cluster.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Cymmer

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: There is a very small retail element dispersed along High Street. There is no substantial or cohesive retail centre in Cymmer.

Conclusions: A retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Gelli

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: The zone fronts Gelli Road and includes clusters of shops, Weavers Garage, an open space and some residential terraces, but other terraces have been excluded. This zone needs simplifying and reducing to exclude isolated commercial uses and residential terraces.

Conclusions: reduce the existing retail zone to include only 24-31 Gelli Road, 180-196 Gelli Road and Weavers Garage.

Maerdy

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan

Consultant's Comments: Maerdy is a small local centre offering a limited range of shops. These facilities are located in a linear pattern and are mixed together with residential dwellings. There is a relatively high vacancy level and it is apparent that there have not been any significant efforts to improve the environmental quality of the town.

Comments: Maerdy retail zone fronts Ceridwen Street and Maerdy Road. Ceridwen Street retains a significant cluster of shops and other uses, but becomes residential in character towards the former Institute. The Maerdy Road part is impacted by a large vacant site but retains retail character on the east side. The west side of Maerdy Road and the northern end of Ceridwen Street lack sufficient retail character to justify their inclusion in a retail designation.

Conclusions: only 1-11 and 24-28a Ceridwen Street and 53-60 Maerdy Road should be carried forward as a retail designation.

Pentre (Queens)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan. This small zone fronts Llewellyn Street between St Peter's Church and the Municipal Offices. The frontage to the west side of the road is longer than the opposite side. There are 6 shops left in this zone, scattered among other uses.

Pentre (Pentre Motors)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan. This very small zone fronts Llewellyn Street in the area of Pentre Motors garage. There are 2 shops opposite the garage.

Pentre (Ystrad Road)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan. This very small zone fronts Ystrad Road. There is 1 shop inside the zone.

Consultant's Comments: [Pentre] offers a very limited range of stores. There is a high vacancy rate within the centre and some units are also derelict. The environmental quality of the centre is poor.

Comments: These three zones appear to result from an earlier rationalisation of one larger retail zone. The Queens zone is affected by some dead frontage at 98-101 Llewellyn Street, but north of there it still retains sufficient retail character to justify a retail designation. The Pentre Motors zone is now too small to be considered a retail centre, although existing businesses provide a useful service to the neighbourhood. The Ystrad Road zone is just recognisable as a retail area with a foodstore at one end and a bank (a rare sight outside the major centres) at the other end, but the commercial uses are too scattered now to form a group coherent enough for a retail designation.

Conclusions: only one retail designation is now appropriate in Pentre, comprising 17-23 and 102-109 Llewellyn Street.

Penygraig

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: The retail area extends along Tylacelyn Road, and has few vacant premises. It benefits from a wide range of shops including both convenience (food) and comparison (non-food) outlets. Penygraig also benefits from a number of services. Although the centre is relatively free from litter, the environmental quality within Penygraig is generally poor. There are also a high number of vacant units.

Comments: This is a useful local retail centre.

Conclusions: carry forward the existing boundary, slightly amended to exclude houses 36 and 96-98 Tylacelyn Road and Capel Pisgah on the northern fringe.

Pontygwaith

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This zone fronts Llewellyn Street. There are a few shops scattered along a street of terraced houses. Whilst the few existing commercial premises serve a useful local function, they are too scattered to be considered a significant cluster.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Ton Pentre

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan, including a small retail land allocation.

Consultant's Comments: Despite being a small centre, it offers a range of shops and services. There are a higher number of comparison (non-food) shops than would be expected such as a shop selling musical instruments and a large pet shop. The vacancy rate is very low and the centre appears to be well used. The centre also benefits from a railway station.

Comments: The zone fronts Church Road and is a useful local centre. The allocated Jerusalem Chapel site remains vacant, but there are few vacant premises. Although it lacks retail uses north of the Spar (on the west side) and north of Llanfoist Street (on the east side), except for Llys Maendy this end is still perceived as an integral part of the retail zone.

Conclusions: carry forward the existing retail zone, but exclude Llys Maendy.

Trebanog

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: There is a very small retail element on Trebanog Road, although one corner shop is not included in the existing retail zone.

Conclusions: carry forward the existing retail zone, slightly extended to include the shop north of the traffic lights.

Trehafod

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: There is a very small retail element dispersed along Trehafod Road. There is no substantial or cohesive retail centre.

Conclusions: A retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Treherbert

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: A wide range of lower order shops and services. Treherbert also benefits from a range of shops and services generally expected in larger centres. These include a number of clothes shops and gift shops, a shop selling DIY items as well as several hairdressers and solicitors offices. Work has been undertaken to enhance the appearance of this centre. It would appear that many of the shop units have benefited from the improvements.

Comments: This substantial zone fronts the southwest side of Bute Street, with a shorter section on the northwest side. The southwest frontage is predominantly retail with few other uses and few vacancies. The northwest frontage, although containing a public house at 38 Bute Street and the Spar at 41, has virtually lost its retail character. There is a vacant shop at 131 Bute Street just outside the zone, but permission was granted for residential development in 2005 so there is no case for expanding the boundary to include the site.

Conclusions: the retail zone should be carried forward subject to deletion of the northwest frontage to Bute Street except 38-41.

Tylorstown

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: A small centre, occupied almost entirely by vacant (and increasingly derelict) shop units. There is a Lidl foodstore located on an edge of centre site. The environmental quality of Tylorstown is very poor. The centre would appear to be in a severe decline, both in terms of its level of facilities and its environmental quality.

Comments: This zone fronts a section of East Road. The separate, out-of-centre Lidl supermarket serves the mid and upper Rhondda Fach. There are five other shops, residential and other non-retail uses and a number of vacant premises. Whilst the few existing commercial premises in East Road serve a useful local function, they are too scattered to be considered a significant cluster.

Conclusions: a retail designation is no longer appropriate.

Tynewydd

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This zone fronts Wyndham Street, but has been drawn very widely to include scattered shops in a residential area as well as a small retail cluster opposite the Wyndham Hotel. Outside the small retail cluster, the zone has no retail character.

Conclusions: the retail zone should be reduced to include only 42-50 Wyndham Street and carried forward.

Williamstown

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: There is a small retail cluster on Brook Street. This is a useful local retail centre, although the existing retail zone is very widely drawn to include terraced houses and commercial properties along Brook Street that are more isolated from the central cluster.

Conclusions: reduce the existing retail zone to include only the central cluster of retail uses at 24-30 and 60-69 Brook Street.

Ynyshir

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan.

Comments: This zone fronts a section of Ynyshir Road. There are shops and other commercial uses scattered along a street of mainly terraced houses, but with a cluster significant enough to display retail character north of the Edith May Day Centre. Although currently outside the retail zone, the Station Hotel and Ynyshir Hotel are dominant buildings that add vitality, and therefore ought to be included.

Conclusions: Ynyshir Hotel to 45 Ynyshir Road and Station Hotel to 104 Ynyshir Road should be carried forward as a retail designation.

Ystrad (Star)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan. This zone fronts Gelligaled Road and Tyntyla Road. Shops and other uses are scattered among terraced houses.

Ystrad (William Street)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; retail zone in Rhondda Local Plan. This small zone fronts the south side of William Street and includes a cleared site, also the Conservative Club on the north side. This zone is mostly residential.

Consultant's Comments: Limited range of shops and services. The centre benefits from a local railway station. It is linear in form, having developed along the main road through the town and is reasonable in terms of quality.

Comments: The two zones appear to result from an earlier rationalisation of one larger retail zone. Although existing businesses provide a useful service to the neighbourhood, the William Street zone with just one shop no longer retains sufficient retail character to justify its designation. The Star area contains shops that are generally too scattered to form a coherent retail zone, however there are 8 properties at 42 and 44-50 Gelligaled Road where retail character remains.

Conclusions: only 42 and 44-50 Gelligaled Road should be carried forward as a retail designation.

Review of Retail Centres:

Northern Strategy Area

Local and Neighbourhood Centres

Cynon Valley

Aberaman

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Aberaman is a small local centre, situated between Aberdare and Mountain Ash. It consists of one street with a mixture of vacant units, local shops and residential units.

Comments: This area mainly fronts Lewis Street. There are 2 clusters of commercial uses where the character is principally retail, one at the north end (outside the existing local shopping area) and the other at the centre and south end of the street (within the existing local shopping area). These are separated by a mostly residential element. The south end of the street is mainly A3 units.

Conclusions: the retail designation should comprise 2 areas: 1-5a Lewis Street with 128-136 Cardiff Road; and 22a-41 Lewis Street with 167-170 Cardiff Road.

Abercwmboi

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; “small group of shops” in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Comments: This small area fronts John Street at Cap Goch. There are 3 shops.

Conclusion: this area is too small for a retail designation to be appropriate here.

Abercynon

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant’s Comments: Abercynon is a small compact centre on a relatively steep hill. It has a small range of facilities. There are some vacant shops in the centre.

Comments: The area consists of two distinct parts: Margaret Street and a section of the parallel Ynysmeurig Road – an unusual variation on the linear pattern of shopping areas in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Although there are some vacancies and residential uses, the frontages to Margaret Street and Ynysmeurig Road retain their retail character.

Conclusions: the retail designation should comprise 2 areas: Margaret Street, and 1a to 26 Ynysmeurig Road.

Cwmaman

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant’s Comments: A small local centre consisting of one main road, which has a number of lower order retail shops, vacant premises and residential houses situated close together. The retail function of this centre is very limited. Despite having a limited range of shops, Cwmaman benefits from a large theatre. The size and quality of this would suggest that it serves more than the immediate catchment.

Comments: This area extends along Fforchaman Road to Mountain Road, and is dominated by the Cwmaman Institute. The retail character is not strong, on account of a large residential element. Existing shops provide a useful local service.

Conclusions: the retail designation is no longer justified by the small number of shops here.

Gadlys

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Small centre to the north of Aberdare. Centre dominated by Lidl (with adjacent car parking).

Comments: This area fronts Gadlys Road. The small area around the Mackworth Arms is not included. The west side of the street lacks retail character, as it is mostly residential and there are some vacancies.

Conclusions: the retail designation should comprise 61 (Post Office) to 77 Gadlys Road, including the Lidl foodstore.

Godreaman

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; "small group of shops" in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Comments: This area fronts Jubilee Road. There are 6 shops. The shops are scattered among terraced housing and do not form a recognisable group.

Conclusions: no retail designation would be appropriate here

Miskin

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; "small group of shops" in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Comments: This small area fronts Bailey Street and Miskin Road. There are 4 shops, other commercial uses, houses and a derelict hall. Mountain Ash is only a quarter of a mile away.

Conclusion: this area is too small for a retail designation to be appropriate here.

Penrhiwceiber

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: A small centre spread over a long distance and comprising a range of shops mixed together with a large number of houses. There is a high vacancy rate, however, it does have a railway station.

Comments: This area fronts mainly Penrhiwceiber Road, plus a small section of Rheola Street. The retail character of this area is generally not strong, on account of a significant residential element and some vacancies. However, despite this, it shows some vitality and is in the centre of a Neighbourhood Renewal Area. Therefore only a minor boundary change is required, to exclude non-retail premises 43-55 Penrhiwceiber Road.

Conclusions: the existing retail designation should be carried forward, but excluding 43-55 Penrhiwceiber Road.

Penywaun

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; "small group of shops" in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Comments: This is a purpose-built neighbourhood shopping area in a housing estate. Consisting of 9 units, the area is fully occupied.

Conclusion: this area is too small for a retail designation to be appropriate here.

Trecynon

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Small centre to the north of Gadlys and Aberdare. Shops are interspersed with houses. Close to Aberdare College.

Comments: one of the two small foodstores for this area stands alone in Llewellyn Street, and there is a significant residential element to the existing retail area. Nevertheless, there is a strong enough retail presence to give the area a retail identity.

Conclusions: the existing retail designation should be carried forward, with only minor amendments.

Tynte

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; "individual shops in residential area" in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Comments: This small area fronts parts of Main Road and Commercial Place. There is one shop.

Conclusion: this area is too small for a retail designation to be appropriate here.

Ynysboeth

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; "individual shops in residential area" in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Comments: This small area fronts Abercynon Road. There are 3 shops. The Ynysboeth Hotel has been demolished and there is permission for 5 dwellings on the site.

Conclusion: this area is too small for a retail designation to be appropriate here.

Ynysybwl

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; local shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Cynon Valley) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Long and narrow shopping centre, measuring approximately 100 metres from end to end. There is a Londis [now a pharmacy] and Co-op in the centre. Many of the shops are interspersed with houses. Parking is restricted.

Comments: The area fronts Windsor Place and the upper part of Robert Street. There are two separate clusters of commercial uses in Windsor Place, and a loose cluster of shops around the Co-op. The mostly terraced housing in between lacks retail character.

Conclusions: the retail designation should comprise 3 areas: 22-52 & 31-47 Robert Street (including the Co-op); 1 Robert Street to 16 Windsor Place (including the Robertstown Inn); and 5-8 Windsor Place.

Review of Retail Centres:

Southern Strategy Area

Principal Town Centres

Llantrisant / Talbot Green

Current Status: Major town centre (district centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Talbot Green [the village] is a small centre that also serves the larger town [i.e. broad area] of Llantrisant. It is approximately 12 miles north west of Cardiff. The [village] shopping area comprises one main street and some shops around the bus station. It extends for approximately 400 metres east to west. Talbot Green lies immediately adjacent to the Newpark Retail Park [now Talbot Green Retail Park], which consists of larger retail units, and a Tesco superstore. The former Tesco store has been demolished and a number of new, large retail units have been built, including Marks & Spencer and Next.

- Talbot Green [village] is a relatively small centre but still performs a number of important roles:
- Convenience (food) shopping – the nearby Tesco superstore and a limited range of other small convenience (food) retail facilities;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a small number of comparison (non-food) shops;
- Eating establishments – a limited range of fast food takeaways and restaurants; and
- Services – a range of services including banks and financial/professional services.

Comments: although Talbot Green is defined as one centre, there are in practice two adjacent centres of contrasting character, which together serve Talbot Green and the wider Llantrisant area. The village retail centre of traditional character fronts Talbot Road and Ely Valley Road, whilst the retail park of modern character lies south of Talbot Road. The existing boundary clearly defines the area from its residential surroundings, with the exception of the Talbot Square area, where the mainly residential Stuart Terrace is included in the shopping area and a shop at 1 Lanelay Road is excluded. There is also a minor matter of correctly following the existing curtilage of the Weaver's Garage site in Talbot Road. There is no obvious land for expansion of the existing centre.

Conclusions: the Llantrisant / Talbot Green principal town retail centre boundary should be based on the existing boundary, subject to exclusion of 4-10 Stuart Terrace, inclusion of 1 Lanelay Road and a minor amendment rear of the Weaver's Garage site.

Primary Shopping Frontages: Llantrisant / Talbot Green has no defined primary retail frontage. The main retail frontage consists of unusually large modern retail units for a centre, where pressure for changes to non-retail uses seems unlikely. Therefore unlike the other two principal town centres, no primary shopping designation is proposed for Llantrisant / Talbot Green centre.

Pontypridd

Current status: Major town centre (sub-regional centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area (with primary and secondary frontages) and fringe shopping areas in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Pontypridd is the largest retail centre within Rhondda Cynon Taf. It is situated in the south-eastern part of the County Borough and is approximately 13 miles north of Cardiff. The shopping area is essentially linear in form, extending approximately 650 metres from the bus station in the north to the railway station in the south. As the largest centre in the County Borough, Pontypridd performs a number of important roles:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a range of national multiples, independent retailers and market traders;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a range of comparison (non-food) shops, with representation in most goods categories by a number of national multiple retailers;
- Entertainment and leisure – including the arts centre, theatre and cinema, pubs and cafés; and
- Services – including banks, estate agents, solicitors, travel agents, hairdressers, medical facilities and civic buildings.

Comments: the central shopping area fronts Taff Street, side streets and part of High Street, and includes Pontypridd Market. The three small fringe areas are in Broadway, Sardis Road and Bridge Street. The existing boundary encloses the area of strongest retail character. The Broadway fringe area consists of A3 uses, but the distinction from the central shopping area is arbitrary and in practice, it is an integral part of the centre. The Sardis Road fringe retains retail character and functions as part of the central shopping area. Although the Bridge Street fringe area is physically more detached from the central shopping area it functions as an extension of the retail area. The market area was upgraded environmentally in the 1990s, and environmental improvements for Taff Street (including pedestrianisation) are planned.

Conclusions: Pontypridd principal town retail centre should comprise the existing central shopping area with the addition of the Broadway, Sardis Road and Bridge Street fringe shopping areas.

Primary Shopping Frontages: in 2006 there were 92 premises in the primary shopping frontages, comprising most of Taff Street. Of these, 75 or 82% were in A1 use. It is considered that all the current primary retail frontages in Pontypridd are predominantly Class A1 retail in character. Therefore the Pontypridd primary shopping area should be carried forward unchanged.

Review of Retail Centres:

Southern Strategy Area

Key Settlement Centres

Llanharan

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: although Llanharan is defined as a key settlement, the existing retail centre is small and the small supermarket lies outside it. It is based around Llanharan Square and despite some other commercial uses retains its retail character. There is no obvious land on which to expand the existing centre, a fact is recognised in the proposed Retail Land Allocations for outside key settlement centres, where land within Strategic Site 8 site of former OCC site, Llanilid is allocated for shopping development of about 2,000 m2 net floorspace (total of convenience (food) and comparison (non-food)).

Conclusions: the existing centre of Llanharan should be carried forward without amendment as a secondary centre for the key settlement.

Tonyrefail

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant’s Comments: Tonyrefail is a small shopping centre in the Ely Valley. It is approximately 4 miles west of Pontypridd. It is a compact T-shaped centre. Although small, it performs a number of important functions:

- Convenience (food) shopping – a medium size foodstore and independent butchers, bakers and greengrocers;
- Comparison (non-food) shopping – a number of independent retailers but no national chains;
- Entertainment and leisure – including public houses; and
- Services – including banks and a range of professional services.

Comments: Retail uses in Tonyrefail front part of Mill Street (mainly the west side) and part of High Street (mainly the south side). A slight extension in Mill Street would better reflect the change from residential to retail character. The bingo hall is unnecessarily included in the shopping area. The north side of Waunrhydd Road is included in the existing shopping area, although the club could usefully be excluded. The Somerfield supermarket stands separately from the centre. There are only small-scale potential redevelopment opportunities for any growth of this centre. This fact is recognised in the proposed Retail Land Allocations for outside key settlement centres, where land east of Mill Street, Tonyrefail is allocated for shopping development of about 2,000 m2 net floorspace (total of convenience (food) and comparison (non-food)).

Conclusions: Tonyrefail key settlement retail centre should be based on the existing shopping area, subject to exclusion of the bingo hall in Collenna Road and the club in Waunrhydd Road, and to inclusion of 48 to 52 Mill Street.

Review of Retail Centres:

Southern Strategy Area

Local and Neighbourhood Centres

Church Village (centre)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: The shopping centre is split into two parts; a modern development of larger units including Somerfield [in fact a reference to Tonteg Precinct, see below] and an older part approximately 500 metres to the west.

Comments: This area comprises the village centre, centred on the crossroads and extending along the busy Main Road. This is a significant local shopping area with outlying units north of it on St Illtyd's Road. However, parts of it lack retail character, so that the current inclusion of dwellings at Dyffryn Terrace, "Hendre", Alma Terrace, "Preswylfa", "Llwyn On" and "Yale Haven" is not justified.

Conclusions: the retail designation should be carried forward, subject to exclusion of the dwellings at each end.

Church Village (Garth Olwg)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: This area was designated in the early 1990s to promote retail development on the site of the cottages surrounding Garth Olwg green "square". This designation has been overtaken by the development of the Garth Olwg schools and lifelong learning centre.

Conclusions: no retail designation is required here, as alternative development has taken place.

Gilfach Goch (Garden Village)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: This small area fronts Cambrian Avenue at the junction with Alfred Street and Thomas Street. There is one small supermarket nearby but outside the centre and a newly built one in the centre. The area provides limited neighbourhood facilities, but they are useful considering the lack of significant retail provision in Gilfach Goch.

Conclusions: the area is too small to justify a retail designation.

Gilfach Goch (High Street)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: The area fronts a small section of High Street. The area provides limited neighbourhood facilities. There is one shop.

Conclusions: the area is too small to justify a retail designation.

Llantrisant Old Town

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; no status in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: the Old Town is mainly seen as a tourist attraction, centred on the Craft and Design Centre. There are very few local shops in view of the proximity of Talbot Green, but these are accompanied by specialist shops that with the A3 uses give the centre of the old town sufficient retail character to justify a designation.

Conclusions: Swan Street, Bull Ring and High Street between the Post Office and the Cross Keys should be designated as a retail area.

Pontyclun

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Busy village centre – largest of lower order centres. Low vacancy rates. High level of A3 uses. 1km to the north-east is Leekes.

Comments: This significant shopping area fronts mainly Cowbridge Road, but the current boundary includes Windsor Court and part of School Street. The north end of the area, including Windsor Court and School Street, is essentially residential and ought to be excluded from it. Conversely, 3 units at 49-53 Cowbridge Road at the south end could usefully be included.

Conclusions: the existing retail designation should be carried forward, amended to exclude 8-14 Llantrisant Road, Windsor Court and School Street west of the Brunel Arms, and to include 2 and 49-53 Cowbridge Road.

Rhydyfelin

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; no status in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Small centre is dominated by the neighbouring Pontypridd College. Relatively modern units with Spar and a number of takeaways.

Comments: This is a small neighbourhood shopping area fronting Dyffryn Road. The redevelopment of the nearby school and adjoining college sites for housing is an opportunity for this area to strengthen its local retail role.

Conclusion: a retail designation including 11-14c and 35-37 Dyffryn Road would be appropriate.

Taffs Well

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Taffs Well lies to the north of Cardiff. It shops are dispersed along the narrow main street. Most are small village shops, although there is a modern Co-op in the centre.

Comments: This area fronts Cardiff Road. It was designated a "central area" rather than a "central shopping area" in the early 1990s in view of the mixed rather than retail character of the area. Although there are some residential and B1 office uses, the area retains retail character except for the wholly residential and office areas between Anchor Street and Alfred's Terrace and north of the Co-operative store car park.

Conclusions: the existing central area should be carried forward as a retail designation subject to exclusion of the two wholly residential and office areas.

Tonteg (Precinct)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: This area comprises the supermarket and adjoining precinct on Main Road. This is a small but vital local shopping centre.

Conclusions: the existing retail designation should be carried forward, adjusted to include the supermarket rear car park.

Tonteg (traffic lights)

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central shopping area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: This is a small area fronting Main Road. The area is mostly residential, with only car sales and a few other commercial uses straddling the busy road.

Conclusions: this area is too small to justify a retail designation.

Treforest

Current Status: Minor town centre (local or neighbourhood centre) in Replacement Structure Plan; central area in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Consultant's Comments: Shopping centre is in two main parts, which appears to have been split by the introduction of the large roundabout from A470. Village shops typify the centre.

Comments: This area fronts Broadway, Fothergill Street and Park Street. It was designated a "central area" rather than a "central shopping area" in the early 1990s in view of the mixed rather than retail character of the area. Most of the commercial uses front Broadway and Park Street: Fothergill Street between Capel Libanus and the former Broadway Carpets site is mainly residential.

Conclusions: two areas should be designated as retail areas, based on the existing central area excluding: Fothergill Street from Capel Libanus to 22; Park Street 70-72; and River Street 7-11.

Tynant

Current Status: none in Replacement Structure Plan; no status in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Taff Ely) Local Plan.

Comments: despite never having been designated a retail area, there is a significant local shopping area at 10-36 Commercial Street.

Conclusions: 10-36 Commercial Street, Tynant should be designated a retail area.