

Neath Town Centre Redevelopment

Retail Statement

April 2020.

Phase 3: Retail & Leisure



Background

This statement provides an update and health check on the previous “Retail Statement” submitted in support of the hybrid outline/full planning application P2013/0863, which was approved on the 13th November 2013.

That permission approved the full planning for the demolition of the Magistrates Court and adjacent demountable buildings, and the development of a 4 deck, 604 space multi-storey car park, 1 No. Retail unit (Class A1), and Shopmobility unit; together with associated permanent and temporary public realm improvements.

Together with outline planning for the demolition of existing multi-storey car park (incorporating Wilkinson and Tesco) and the Greyhound PH, and the development of 9 No. Retail units (Class A1); 7 No. Retail/Food and Drink units (Classes A1/A3); 2 No. Retail/office units (Classes A1/A2); 1 No. Office/Community facility unit (Class B1/A2/D1), and up to 31 No. Residential Units, together with associated public realm improvements, reconfigured service yard and car parking.

Development of the first phase (granted full planning permission) has been completed. Phase 2 has also commenced development.

Retail and other complementary uses within a designated retail centre do not require justification in terms of use or location. However, it is considered appropriate to set out the background to the proposals, and the evolving face of retail and town centres and how this development fits in with, and reflects that evolving framework.



Phase One.

Phase 2, was granted full planning permission under P2016/0654 on the 9th January 2017 for a 3 Storey mixed use block comprising 6 commercial units (Class A1/A2/A3 with 12 No. residential units and associated works, including changes to existing service yard and public realm improvements.



Phase Two.

This application relates to the area previously defined as Block A and Phase 2A. The former outline approval granted a quantum of development, all within A1 retail use, providing a mix of unit sizes, which are set out within the parameters of development matrix, which is set out below for information.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION - All Phases
3738 NEATH TOWN CENTRE

13/09/2013

Gross Internal Area										
Block A	Use Class	Use	Ground Floor m ²	Upper Levels m ²	Floors	Total Area m ²	shop frontage m	ground clear height	upper floors	Notes
Unit A7	A1	Retail	2,120	289	G	2,409	33m	4.2m	n/a	Carpark over unit
Unit A9	-	shop mobility	68	0	G	68	n/a	2.5m	2.3m clear	access through carpark & external service yard
Carpark	-	Carpark	3,647	14,428	G, 1, 2, 3	18,075	n/a	2.3m	2.3m min clear	
MANAGEMENT	-	carpark office/ plant	10	0	G	10	n/a	2.3m	2.3m min clear	
Total Area			5,845	14,717		20,562	Total Area			total height of block at stair cores = 14.5m

Block A	Use Class	Use	Ground Floor m ²	first floor m ²	levels	Total Area m ²	shop frontage m	ground clear height	upper floors clear	Notes
Unit A1	A1	Retail	2,324	2,514	G, 1	4,838	33	4.5m	4.5m	areas includes lobby area to front
Unit A2-3	A1	Retail	1,058	1,058	G, 1	2,116	33	9.5m	3.5m	
Unit A4-6	A1	Retail (empty Mezzanine)	1,708	0	G, 1	1,708	38	9.5m	3.5m	Empty First floor for tenant Mezzanine
Total Area			5,090	3,572		8,662	Total Area			total max. height for units A1 & A7 = 13.5m total max. height for units A2-A6 = 11m

Block B	Use Class	Use	Floor m ²	floors/ floor	Floors	m ²	shop frontage m	height	upper floors	Notes
Unit B1	A1/A3	Retail/ Restaurant	278	0	G	278	8	4.5m	n/a	GF only
Unit B2-B4	A1	Retail	159	0	G	159	25	4.5m	2.4m clear	GF only
Residential	C3	Residential	142	650	G, 1, 2, 3	2,092	-	-	-	Entrance on Ground, 12-16 flats above
Total Area			579	650		2,529	Total Area			total height of Block to eaves 14.8m maximum +3m roof zone

Block C	Use Class	Use	Floor m ²	Level 1, 2m ²	Floors	m ²	shop frontage m	height	upper floors m	Notes
Unit C1-5	A1/A3	Retail/ Restaurant	441	0	G	441	43	3.5m	n/a	GF only
Residential	C3	Residential	74	530	1, 2	1,134	-	-	2.4m	Entrance on Ground, 10-15 flats above
Total Area			515	530		1,575	Total Area			total height of Block to eaves 11m maximum +3m roof zone

Block D	Use Class	Use	m ²	Level 1m ²	Floors	m ²	shop frontage m	height	upper floors	Notes
Unit D1-2	A1/A2	Retail/ Financial	443	0	G	443	28m	4.5m	n/a	GF only
Unit D3	A1/A3	Retail/ Restaurant	319	0	G	319	23.9m	4.5m	n/a	GF only
Unit D4	B1/D1/A2	Office, Services	76	1,014	G, 1, 2	2,104	n/a	4.5m	2.7m	GF reception+ 2 floors offices
Total Area			838	1,014		2,866	Total Area			total height of block up to 13m

DETAILED PLANNING AREA						20,562	PHASE 1 AREA
OUTLINE PLANNING AREA						18,161	PHASE 2 AREA (2a, 2b, 2c & 2d)
total						38,723	m ²

Multi storey provision (approximate)					
Level	CPG	CP1	CP2	CP3	Total
Disabled	12	10	8	0	30
Shop/mobility	6	0	0	0	6
Electric Charging	6	0	0	0	6
Regular	62	99	192	207	560
Car Park Area = 18,230m ²					604
PERCENTAGE DISABLED					6 %

Note: there are an additional 9 parking spaces at street level elsewhere in the development

Break down of planning uses		
9,114	m ²	A1 use
443	m ²	A1/A2 use
1,038	m ²	A1/A3 use
2,104	m ²	A2/B1/D1 Flexible use
3,226	m ²	22-30 flats C3 use

The Neath Town Centre is a designated Town Centre within the adopted Development Plan (LDP) The development of Phase 1 and the subsequent applications have resulted in the loss of the former Wilkinson store of circa 2,500 sq.m and the Tesco Metro of circa 1,000 sq.m. The proposals also resulted in the demolition of the former multi-storey car park, which formed part of those retail units, and the relocation of the Wilkinson Store into Phase 1.

The development was planned to address the increasing pressures of the Neath Town Centre from out of town retail parks, by providing modern flexible unit shops, smaller kiosk units, that would accommodate local or bespoke retailers, together with a small element of supporting uses, such as A3 restaurant/ café uses.

The development then proposed;

- 2 anchor stores 1 x 4,837 sq.m. (over 2 floors) and 1 x 2,148 sq.m. (on 1 floor only)
- 5 large unit shops 400 – 1,400 sq.m.
- 5 standard unit shops 100 – 400 sq.m.
- 7 kiosk/small shops 60 – 80 sq.m.

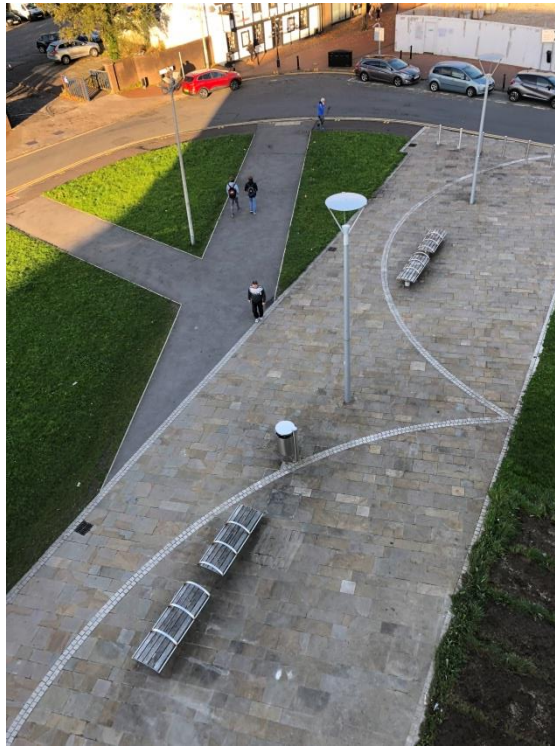
Of the 19 units, some were identified for dual A1 / A3 food and drink uses to target an established need. The smaller units were located along the new pedestrian circuit linking Water Street and Orchard Street.

The total commercial floor space was approximately 14,525 sq.m. However, the ground floor space was 8,926 sq.m. The development proposals replaced approx. 3,500 sq.m A1 comparison floor space, and 1,000 convenience floor space. The additional ground floor trading floor space was circa 3,682 sq.m. (Allowing 80% gross to net ratio)



The development proposals to be considered under this application have a number of key aims and objectives;

1. To improve and expand the retail offer of the town centre.
2. To retain expenditure currently leaking out of the country borough.
3. To provide unit sizes, that are the right size to attract the right retailers, and provide an increased choice for retailers.
4. To increase footfall within the Town centre.
5. To provide improved and centralised leisure/ community facility opportunities to attract and retain customers within the centre for longer, and to improve the day and evening economy, and potentially provide a destination within the heart of the town centre.
6. To improve public realm and enhance and complement the towns unique character.



Overview of relevant National and Local Planning Policy and guidance.

National Planning Policy.



Planning Policy Wales (Edition 10, December 2018)

Chapter 4: Active and Social Places,

Retail and Commercial Development states that;

4.3.1 Retail and commercial centres are hubs of social and economic activity and the focal point for a diverse range of services which support the needs of local communities. They are highly accessible to different modes of transport and are the most sustainable locations for new development.

4.3.2 Retail and commercial centres should be identified in development plans and include established city, town, district, local, village and neighbourhood centres, which provide a range of shopping, commercial and leisure opportunities as well as places of employment, education, civic identity and social interaction. Opportunities to live in these centres, combined with their good public transport links, make them the most sustainable places.

4.3.3 The Welsh Government identifies a number of overarching objectives for retail and commercial centres, which planning authorities should aim to deliver through their development plan and development management decisions ensuring their maximum contribution to the well-being goals. The planning system must:

- promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop, socialise and conduct business;
- sustain and enhance retail and commercial centres' vibrancy, viability and attractiveness; and
- Improve access to, and within, retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

Retail Strategies

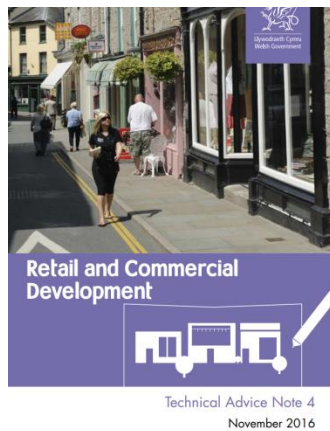
4.3.4 Retail and commercial centres are central to community activity and local prosperity and in order to plan for them effectively it is important to understand their function, roles and relationships.

4.3.5 Planning authorities should establish through their development plan a clear strategy for retail development, supported by policies, to achieve vibrant, attractive and viable retail and commercial centres. The strategy and policies should set out a framework for the future of retail and commercial centres in their area, taking in to account strategies in adjoining authorities, to promote a successful retailing sector supporting existing and new communities.

4.3.6 Retail and commercial centres will experience growth and decline, and development plans should identify these changing retail pressures and opportunities and devise appropriate responses to them in their retail strategies. In some situations it may be necessary to take pro-active steps to identify retail and commercial centre locations for expansion. In others it may be necessary to identify measures to reinvigorate centres or to manage a change in the relative importance of a centre as other centres' roles expand. Strategies and supporting policies should be based on robust evidence.

4.3.7 The use of masterplans, development briefs or place plans can complement retail strategies by providing additional detail and supporting the implementation of development plan policies. In developing strategies, plans and policies to revitalise and increase the attractiveness of existing retail and commercial centres, planning authorities should consult the private sector and local communities.

These matters are further amplified within;



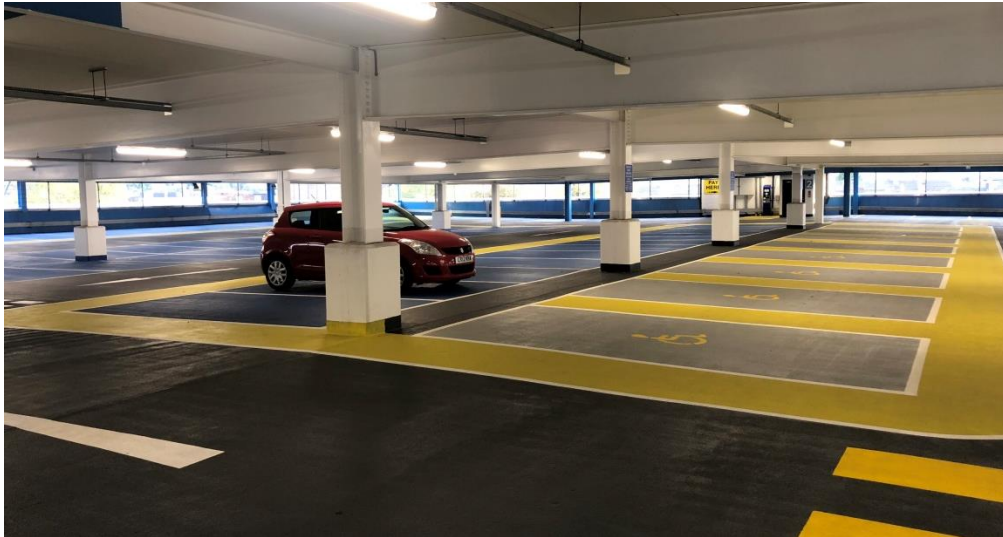
Technical Advice Note 4: Retail and Commercial Development. (Nov 2016)

The TAN provides advice on; retail strategies, masterplanning and Place Plans, the tests of retail need and Sequential approach to development.

In relation to the “Tests of Retail Need” Tan 4 clarifies that;

6.1 The tests of retail need are the starting point for planning for new retail development in both development plans and development management. The quantitative needs test is based on forecasting of expenditure on a certain type of retail good (comparison or convenience for example) over a period of time, which is then assessed against the current level of provision. Any shortfall in the provision is then expressed, using expenditure per square metre calculations, as the level of new retail provision required.

6.2 The requirement to consider need for a development **is not relevant** for retail proposals **within a defined retail and commercial centre in a development plan**. However it will be required for any application in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location which is not in accordance with an adopted development plan.



In addition to this, Welsh Government recently announced the Transforming Towns initiative.

Transforming Towns a Welsh Government Initiative to encourage investment within town centres, for businesses, housing, leisure facilities, commercial premises or community facilities has been launched to increase viability. To increase footfall and the attractiveness of town centers for multiple uses, thereby removing its reliance on retail alone, but complementing it with other uses that attract people and businesses into centres that have seen decline due to the changing retail market.

The Transforming Towns package includes measures to increase footfall by making sure the public sector locate services in town centre locations, tackle empty buildings and land to help bring them back into use, and greening our town centres.

Towns are vital to environmental, economic, social and cultural well-being in Wales – around 40% of our population live in small towns of less than 20,000 people but nearly everyone identifies emotionally with a town – or city – in some way.

Many towns are struggling in the wake of declining retail sales and the way we use town centres has changed.

To help breathe new life into town centres, the Welsh Government unveiled a new 'Town Centre First' approach, which means locating services and buildings in town centres wherever possible. As part of this approach, all Welsh Government

departments will put the health and vibrancy of town centres as the starting point for their location decision-making processes.

Utilising this approach, the public sector is also being encouraged to support towns by locating offices, facilities and services within them in order to drive footfall and create or sustain vibrancy.

Town centres play a vital role in Wales, and they have long been a hub of day-to-day life. However, it is no secret that they have faced huge difficulties in recent years in the wake of retail closures, online shopping, public sector cutbacks and continued lack of investment.

The Town Centre First approach, which will ensure that their strategic importance is considered in any new planning and investment decisions. Local authorities recognise the value of town centres for whole communities, which is why many councils have decided to open new civic offices, public sector offices, one stop shops, or schools in their local town centres.

Although a town centre location will not be appropriate for all services and facilities, this approach will ensure that these locations are given primary consideration, and that any decisions for locating elsewhere should be backed by evidence.

The relocation of the leisure centre, and library into the heart of this new phase of development, and the town centre, will comply completely with this emerging strategy, and complement other retail and commercial uses, together with enhanced public realm. That together with 21st century parking provision within the new car park, provide a destination with multiple uses, that will enhance the existing town centre, and increase its vitality and viability.

Local Development Plan Policy.

A material change since the original statement was undertaken is the adoption of the Local Development Plan in January 2016.

The regeneration of the Neath Town Centre is specifically referred to within the Local Development Plan under Policy CCRS1;

Policy CCRS1 Coastal Corridor Regeneration Schemes

Neath Town Centre Mixed Use Regeneration Scheme

4.0.19 The regeneration scheme in Neath Town Centre is a major redevelopment which includes the site of the former Council offices, surface car park, Magistrates Court, multi-storey car park and two retail stores below and other surrounding land.

4.0.20 The site is allocated as a retail-led mixed use scheme which will contain a small element of housing (approximately 50 units). The site lies in very close proximity to the historic heart of Neath and offers the potential to sympathetically redevelop the site to provide facilities to enhance the vitality of the town centre while the additional residential accommodation will help make the area more vibrant.

5.2.38 Policy R1 Retail Allocations

Neath Town Centre

5.2.39 The allocations make provision for the retail need identified by the Neath Port Talbot Retail Study. The study identifies that a 30% increase in market share of comparison goods shopping in Neath is likely to be achieved over the LDP period which is based on the assumption that the quality and quantity of new facilities will increase which would reduce shopping trips / expenditure leaking outside the town. The development of the Neath Town Centre Regeneration Scheme, for which funding is in place, will enable this to be achieved. The allocation of land for the Neath Town Centre Regeneration Scheme will accommodate all, or a large majority, of the projected net additional comparison and convenience goods floor space in Neath. Furthermore, the scheme may also offer the potential to relocate existing A1 operators to free retail space for leisure / food and drink units to be introduced within the primary retail core and has the potential to accommodate other main town centre uses such as A2 and A3 retail floor space and leisure uses.

In addition retailing within designated retail centres are protected and development proposals considered against the following specific retail policies;

5.2.43 Policy R2 Proposals Within Retail Centres

Policy R2 Proposals Within Retail Centres

1. Within the designated retail centres, uses that would enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the centre, including uses in classes A and D will be permitted where:

- (a) The proposal integrates with and strengthens the layout, retail character and pedestrian flows of the centre; and
- (b) Does not prejudice the effective use of upper floors; and
- (c) Maintains a vibrant and attractive shopping street frontage.

2. Proposals for the redevelopment or conversion within a retail centre of retail, commercial, leisure or community premises to ground floor uses not complying with point 1 of this policy will only be permitted where:

(a) It is demonstrated that the existing use is no longer viable or appropriate in the location; and

(b) The proposal would not result in the loss of a supermarket, shop, café or public house which is important in terms of providing facilities to serve the community;

Or:

(c) The proposal would result in the redevelopment of derelict, unsightly, underused and vacant land / premises for alternative uses which would have significant social, community or regeneration benefits.

3. Within the designated Primary Shopping Streets in Neath and Port Talbot town centres, ground floor uses other than Class A1 (Shops) will only be permitted where:

(a) The proposal falls within Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services) or Class A3 (Food and Drink); and

(b) The proposal does not result in the over-dominance of any non-A1 use; and

(c) The proposal on its own and/or in combination with other proposals and commitments does not lead to:

(i) A material adverse effect on (ii) A material reduction in the number and distribution of shop premises within the retail frontage that it will occupy and within the Primary Shopping Streets as a whole.

4. Within the district and local retail centres, proposals that would result in the over dominance of one use to the detriment of the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the retail centre will be resisted the retail function of the Primary Shopping Streets; or

5.2.44 Town, district and local retail centre boundaries are defined on the Proposals Map. Within the retail centres, a limited mix of uses is considered appropriate in accordance with national guidance. Uses within classes A (incorporating A1 Shops, A2 Financial and Professional Services and A3 Food and Drink) and D (incorporating D1 Non-Residential Institutions and D2 Assembly and Leisure) are likely to be acceptable in principle, together with other proposals that may not fall within a defined use class but would be appropriate within the centre and would enhance it. In addition to shops, this may include entertainment, restaurants, community and leisure uses as set out in the policy. Normally, new developments in retail centres will be expected to maintain a retail-type shop frontage and display on the ground

floor, although this may not always be appropriate. However, in all cases new uses or buildings should be designed to maintain a high quality public shopping environment.

5.2.45 In order to support the retail centres, the introduction of uses that would dilute the retail function of the centre and its vitality, viability and attractiveness will be resisted. Any such proposals will be expected to show that the existing use is no longer viable and that the premises do not fulfil a key significant community need that would otherwise not be met within the centre. Applicants will normally be expected to show that reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for sale or lease for appropriate retail, commercial, leisure or community purposes.

5.2.46 The retail core areas in Neath and Port Talbot are defined through the identification of primary shopping streets, within which a more restricted range of uses are considered to be appropriate in order to maintain a vital and attractive shopping environment. Primary shopping streets have been identified in Neath and Port Talbot in order to reflect the areas of the town centres where A1 uses predominate and where the retention of A1 uses is considered a key factor in protecting and enhancing the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the town centres. Whilst it is recognised that a wider mix of uses within the town centres, including estate agents, banks and cafés, can complement the shopping function and increase the vitality these can also create dead frontages, a loss of retail floor space and detract from the attractiveness of the centre. Proposals that would lead to a detrimental over dominance of non-A1 uses will be resisted, for example if such a use is proposed next to another non-retail unit or in a prominent location where it would change the perceived character of the primary shopping area.

5.2.47 There are concerns that in some cases smaller retail centres are in danger of being adversely affected by an over concentration of non-retail uses that, while they may be individually acceptable within a centre, have a cumulative effect that undermines its overall functioning and attractiveness. Uses under Class A2 and A3 (in particular hot food takeaways) have caused concern in some cases, and the policy consequently seeks to limit the number of such uses to avoid detrimental effects through over dominance.

Neath Port Talbot Retail Study July 2013, (GVA).

As part of the LDP evidence base NPTCBC commissioned a retail study for the borough, undertaken by GVA. In relation to Neath Town Centre it refers;

Neath

4.29 Neath town centre serves the wider Neath area as well as the Neath, Dulais and to some extent the Swansea Valley. As a town centre, Neath has an historic indoor market, comprising small shop units that attract specialist retailers that provide diversification to the town centre. The town centre as a whole provides a relatively large number and wide range of shops and service uses for the local community, but also caters for entertainment and cultural events through the Gwyn Hall (which encompasses a café, gallery, cinema, theatre and dance studio). This has been redeveloped in the last few years to provide an important leisure facility both for the residents of Neath and those within the wider sub-regional area.

4.30 The town centre is located in the south-western part of the County Borough and is the largest of the three principal town centres. In total, the town centre itself comprises 259 units, the majority of which are in retail use. A full breakdown of these uses is provided later in this section of the report. The centre is organised around the primary shopping streets of Green Street, Wind Street, Water Street, Angel Street and New Street. The primary frontage is focused on Green Street, Wind Street, Water Street, New Street and Angel Street. Green Street and Wind Street run in an east-west direction and provide the core of the town centre with the vast majority of the units in these areas being A1 retail. Outside of this there are concentrations of A3 food and drink units along The Parade, interspersed with A2 service units. The Morrisons superstore, on the northern edge of the town centre, acts as the principle convenience goods destination. Although outside the town centre boundary in the UDP, the store is linked to the primary retail core via Angel Street and we consider the relationship of Morrisons to the town centre later in this report. As you move away from the core primary shopping streets, the mix becomes more varied, for example, along Windsor Road there is an equal mixture of A1, A2 and A3 units, and a similar situation arises along Old Market Street and New Street.

4.31 In terms of occupiers, Neath town centre benefits from a number of recognised key attractors from the multiple retailer sector, along with high street banks and financial institutions. HSBC, Lloyds TSB, Halifax, Barclays, and Abbey National are all represented within the centre. Whilst the centre comprises a high level of independent traders, it also benefits from a number of key multiple retailers including Marks and Spencers, SpecSavers, New Look, Next, H Samuel, WHSmiths, Boots, Sports Direct, and Argos. Data collected by NPTCBC over time shows that these are well-established within the centre. It is clear, that during the economic downturn a number of retailers have been lost to Neath Town Centre, these include Evans, Game and Woolworths. It is also apparent that new retailers have been attracted to the centre, with a new Bon Marche outlet opening within the last year.

4.32 Vacant units are distributed throughout the centre (vacant units are found on Green Street, Orchard Street, New Street, Old Market Street, Water Street and Queen Street) However, and importantly, the vacant units generally occur as individual units, therefore giving the town centre a low level of vacancy overall, and a vibrant feel as there are no clusters of vacant units located in the particular parts of the centre. From analysis over time it is clear that between 2001 and 2012 there are some small areas of the town centre which have suffered from continuous vacancies (these include Angel Place, Charlesville Place, Croft Road and Queen Street Back

Road). Within the remainder of the town centre, vacant units appear to be fairly sporadic, well spaced out and in the majority of cases tend to be reoccupied over time.

At that time the diversity of ground floor uses and type/mix of retail provision was as follows within Tables 4.4 and 4.5 taken from that report.

Table 4.4: Diversity of Ground Floor Uses (2012)

Use Class	Neath		Port Talbot		Pontardawe	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
A1	142	54.8%	116	62.0%	40	49.4%
A2	46	17.8%	32	17.1%	15	18.5%
A3	48	18.5%	29	15.5%	19	23.5%
Service	1	0.4%	1	0.5%	1	1.2%
Sui Generis	3	1.2%	1	0.5%	3	3.7%
Vacant	19	7.3%	8	4.3%	3	3.7%
TOTAL	259	100%	187	100%	81	100%

Source: NPTCBC

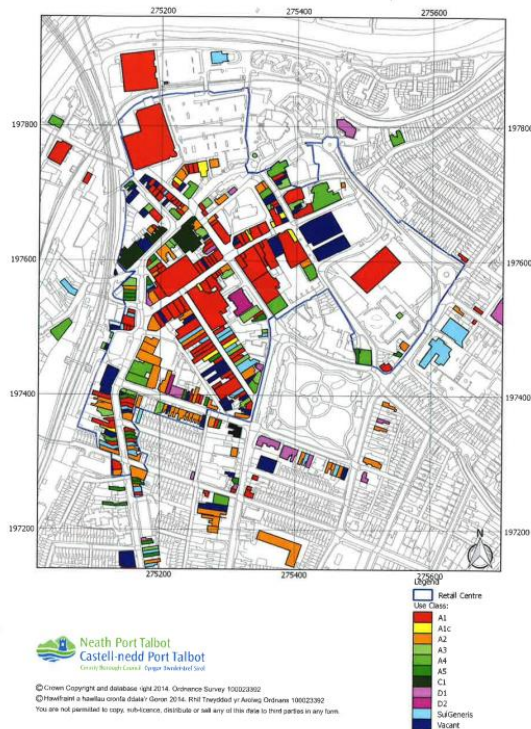
Table 4.5: Type of Retail Provision: proportions of Ground Floor A Class Units (June 2012)

Retail Type	Neath		Port Talbot		Pontardawe		UK Average
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%
Comparison	136	52.5%	97	51.9%	32	39.5%	41.47%
Convenience	8	3.1%	17	9.1%	6	7.4%	8.54%
Other	3	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1.14%
Service	84	32.4%	59	31.6%	38	46.9%	35.22%
Vacant	28	10.8%	14	7.5%	5	6.2%	13.63%
TOTAL	259	100%	187	81	100%	100%	

Source: NPTCBC

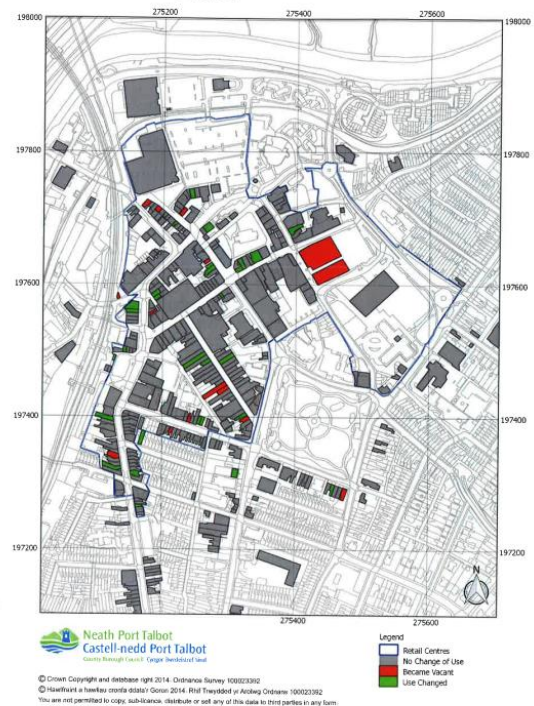
*GB averages provided by Experian GOAD

Neath Town Centre



The Changes to Neath's Retail provision 2015/2016

Neath Town Centre



4.46 In terms of comparison goods outlets, both Neath and Port Talbot have a proportion which is higher than the national average. This suggests the towns have a definitive 'shopping' function and may therefore benefit from an increase in service based uses, particularly in the food and drink sectors which could expand the evening economy. Pontardawe however is more in line with the UK average for comparison goods units within a centre. It is clear that Pontardawe has an over representation of service uses which suggests that the retail function of the centre is diminishing. In relation to convenience goods retailers, Port Talbot and Pontardawe have a proportion of retailers which is similar to the national average, although Neath has only 3% of retailers selling convenience goods. There is no single explanation for this situation, although an influence is likely to be the dominance of out of centre provision within the town.

4.47 On a positive note, all three centres have vacancy rates that are below the national average (of 13.6%). Over the last 11 years, vacancy rates within the centres have fluctuated with Neath and Port Talbot experiencing their lowest rates in 2004, and Pontardawe's vacancy rate is currently at its lowest level for the last 11 years (with many former vacancies now returning to retail or service use).



These foregoing figures have been refreshed in 2016, where the diversity, type and adjacencies were again surveyed. As part of the Retail Land Use and Floor space

Survey Monitoring Report, Sept 2016.

The Retail presence in Neath in 2016

Retail Centre	Category			
Neath Town Centre	287	%	Area m2 59760	%
Comparison	76	26.48	21116	35.33
Convenience	13	5.53	6373	10.66
Finance and Business	42	14.63	6459	10.80
Health	4	1.39	606	1.01
Leisure	68	23.69	13730	22.97
Public Service	2	0.69	342	0.57
Retail Service	41	14.28	3213	5.37
Vacant	41	14.28	7921	13.25

Retail Centre	Use Class			
Neath Town Centre	Class 287	%	Area m2 59760	%
A1	107	37.28	28113	47.04
A1c	10	3.48	1183	1.98
A2	49	17.07	7417	12.41
A3	23	8.04	3044	5.09
C1	3	1.04	2427	4.06
D1	5	1.74	686	1.14
D2	3	1.04	925	1.62
Sui Generis	17	5.92	2014	3.37
Vacant	41	14.28	7921	13.25

The 2015 Retail position for Neath Town Centre

Retail Centre	Use Class			
Neath Town Centre	Class 281	%	Area m2 57009	%
A1	105	37.37	28528	50.04
A1c	12	4.27	1531	2.68
A2	51	18.14	7705	13.51
A3	50	17.80	8711	15.28
C1	3	1.07	2431	4.26

D1	5	1.78	686	1.20
D2	3	1.07	941	1.65
Sui Generis	12	4.27	1437	2.52
Vacant	40	14.23	5039	8.84

Retail Centre	Category			
Neath Town Centre	Class 281	%	Area m2 57009	%
Comparison	78	27.75	21007	36.84
Convenience	15	5.33	7531	13.21
Finance & Business	40	14.23	6371	11.17
Health	4	1.42	606	1.06
Leisure	65	23.13	1317	23.04
Public Service	3	1.06	638	4.26
Retail Service	36	12.81	2680	1.20
Vacant	40	14.23	5039	8.84

This survey concludes that;

Neath continues to maintain a strong trading position. There is a predominant A1 presence along the primary shopping streets. A3 uses support the town centre on its primary street margins and there still remains a large choice of commercial and banking. There are a small amount of vacancies across the town. The individual units that remain closed are dispersed and therefore do not predominate in any part of the town. This is apart from the Tesco/Wilkinson/Old Multi-Storey Car Park closure which has been pivotal to the redevelopment of the town Centre. There is also two closures in Queen Street but these are both due to a significant fire this year. On a more positive note, other vacancies on the primary shopping streets have secured new business and this supports a vibrant town centre which in turn maintains its vitality. The new Multi-Storey Car Park and Wlko have opened this year and appear to offer a much safer and enhanced car borne shopping trip.

In relation specifically to the Town Centre of Neath and the regeneration strategy proposed, the GVA report states;

4.57 The strategy prepared for Neath Town Centre was launched in 2008 and proposed a number of improvements to the centre. These included an additional 20,500 sq.m. of retail floor space, accompanied by leisure uses, and a new museum and library. In addition to new floor space, the strategy also included a number of measures for the pedestrian environment, a new multi-deck car park, affordable housing and an area to function as a public square with cafes, seating and landscaping. Grant funding (of £100,000) has also been made available by the WG for improvements to and around the existing railway station. The strategy to regenerate Neath town centre continues to be driven by NPTCBC's regeneration department and a retail-led mixed use redevelopment scheme for land bounded by Wind Street, Prince of Wales Drive, Water Street and Gnoll Park Road is being advanced, with a planning application expected to be submitted shortly.



Development Proposals.

The application proposes to build out 5,375 sqm of ground floor floor space, with an additional 1,704 sqm of first floor space, together with service yard, and public realm improvements.

The scheme includes a new leisure centre, with swimming pool, gym, health suite and ancillary café over 2 floors providing 3,345.8 sq m, together with 6 commercial units, at ground floor, and library at first floor.

Unit Number	sqm	sqft	Use class
1	338sq m	3638.2 sqft	A1/D1
2	292sq m	3143.06 sqft	A1/D1
3	217sq m	2335.77 sqft	A1
4	193sq m	2077.43 sqft	A1
5	169sq m	1819.1 sqft	A1/D1
6	145sq m	1560.77 sqft	A1/D1
Total	1,354 sq m	14574.33 sqft	

Based on the previous hybrid planning permission, and the subsequent Phase 2 development (with full planning), the commercial floor space approximately equates

Approx sq.m	Hybrid Application Totals	Phase 1	Phase 2	Proposed Development Retail & Leisure
Total Floor space	12,711sq.m	2,409 sq.m	312 sq.m	7,082.2 m2
Ground floor	8,926 sq.m	2,409 sq.m	312sq.m	5,375 m2
Remaining floor space		10,302sq.m	9,990sq.m	2,907.8 m2



Breakdown and comparison of floor space.

The proposed development therefore falls within the commercial floor space previously permission, still allowing further development within development Blocks B & D (as identified on the previously approved masterplan) where the remaining sq m commercial floor space could be accommodated within smaller kiosk units within the public realm, to both provide variety in the scale and range of units and facilities on offer, and to accommodate other uses that would support and enhance the vitality, viability and attractiveness of the centre, including uses in Classes A and D, and in principle according with the overarching retail strategy set out within Policies R1 and R2 of the Local Development Plan.

Former Retail Statement (2013)

The previous hybrid application set out to assess the quantity of development proposed and a qualitative on the existing provision, and demand identified to enhance the existing centre. These are set out under the following broad headings;

- An overview of planning policy and retail trends.
- Current retail provision, health check and SWOT assessment.
- Study area and catchment population.
- Expenditure analysis and expenditure flows.
- Town centre performance analysis and future capacity requirements.

The main conclusions of that report are;

- The new Neath Town Centre development will provide a wide range of benefits for Neath Town Centre;
- It will provide much needed additional quality retail floor space, of appropriate size for current retailer needs, thereby helping Neath to extend its offer and choice.
- It will deliver new and improved anchor stores.
- It will deliver new improved customer facilities, including modern parking, modern shop mobility and a modern shopping environment.
- It will extend the town centre offer and create a much needed circular route linking to other retail and non-retail anchors for the town centre.
- It will provide a highly visible and impactful retail statement for the town centre.
- It will complement and enhance the performance of existing retail offers including the Market Hall, Morrisons, M&S and established streets.
- The development will secure new retailers for the town and extend the choice and offer for its customer base. The development is of sufficient size to build on the attraction of Neath Town Centre, to generate additional trips, recapture lost expenditure and new users.
- However it is also contained in size and is fully sustainable within the 2017 comparison goods available expenditure.
- It is also fully compliant with both local and national planning policy and aspirations.



Conclusions.

The development, as approved in 2013 remains extant, and the quantum of development in respect of retail and other commercial floor space can be developed out, subject to the submission of a reserved matters application.

This application seeks full planning permission, taking into account the demand from retailers currently interested in a presence within the centre, and advice from retail consultants on the scale of unit size appropriate. Whilst still allowing additional expansion to occur under subsequent phases. This ensures that the capacity and need both quantitative and qualitative can be accommodated within this designated centre, when potential demand dictates.

It is considered that the uses requested as part of this application, providing A1 in combination with modern leisure facilities, as a destination, at the heart of the town centre, together with complementary first floor uses would provide a significant enhancement to the existing town centre, and one that lies in close proximity to parking and public transport.

It is therefore considered that the provision of further retail development within the designated town centre, plus leisure uses of a scale that would attract modern retailers to this established centre, would complement the scale and offer of the commercial development within Neath.

- Encourage existing visitors to visit more often.
- Encourage non-Neath users to visit and encourage repeat visits.
- Recapture leaked expenditure
- Complement existing trade without impacting on existing trade or other centres.
- Provide a destination within the town centre for existing and new visitors to the town with diverse opportunities beyond retail alone.

- Result in an overall positive enhancement of public realm and visitor experience.

As such it would accord with Policies R1 and R2 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development