

## Town centre uses

- 9.28 This section of the plan sets out the Council's policies on the mix and balance of uses with Camden's centres.

### Food drink and entertainment uses

- 9.29 Camden's image as a dynamic and attractive place is in part due to the number and quality of restaurants, bars and entertainment venues in the borough, with Camden Town and Covent Garden having particular concentrations of such premises. These areas play an important part in the night time economy of Camden and of London, socially, economically and in terms of job provision. Covent Garden, for example, is identified in the London Plan as part of a strategic cultural area. However, night time activity can also lead to problems such as antisocial behaviour, crime and fear of crime, noise, congestion and disturbance.
- 9.30 Conflicts can arise as, due to the borough's densely developed, mixed use nature, much night-time activity occurs close to places where people live. In addition, large numbers of such uses can change the character of the area in which they are located and reduce its range of shops or the quality of the shopping environment. Conflicts can be made worse where a particular location becomes a focus for late night activity.
- 9.31 Eating, drinking and other leisure uses provide a key role in the attractiveness of Camden's centres. However, food, drink and entertainment uses can affect the overall viability and vitality of a centre by eroding the retail offer and can have an impact on amenity through noise and other impacts. In order to protect the primarily retail role of core frontages, the preferred location of food, drink and entertainment uses is secondary frontages.

### Other town centre uses

- 9.32 Town centre uses include:
- shops and markets (use class A1);
  - financial and professional services (A2);
  - cafes and restaurants (A3);
  - drinking establishments (A4);
  - hot food takeaways (A5);
  - offices (B1a);
  - hotels (C1);
  - community uses (D1), including neighbourhood police facilities;
  - leisure uses (D2);
  - theatres (sui generis);
  - betting shops (sui generis);
  - a number of other uses not in any use class (see Other town centre uses below).
- 9.33 Main town centre uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling

centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

- 9.34 This policy will be applied to proposals for these uses, whether located inside or outside of a centre.

## Policy TC4 Town centres uses

The Council will ensure that the development of shopping, services, food, drink, entertainment and other town centre uses does not cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre, the local area or the amenity of neighbours.

We will consider:

- a. the effect of development on shopping provision and the character of the centre in which it is located;
- b. the cumulative impact of food, drink and entertainment uses, taking into account the number and distribution of existing uses and non-implemented planning permissions and any record of harm caused by such uses;
- c. the Council's expectations for the mix and balance of uses within frontages for each centre are set out in Appendix 4;
- d. the individual planning objectives for each centre, as set out in the supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on town centres, retail and employment;
- e. impacts on small and independent shops and impacts on markets;
- f. the health impacts of development;
- g. the impact of the development on nearby residential uses and amenity and any prejudice to future residential development;
- h. parking, stopping and servicing and the effect of the development on ease of movement on the footpath;
- i. noise and vibration generated either inside or outside of the site;
- j. fumes likely to be generated and the potential for effective and unobtrusive ventilation; and
- k. the potential for crime and antisocial behaviour, including littering.

To manage potential harm to amenity or the local area, we will, in appropriate cases, use planning conditions and obligations to address the following issues:

- l. hours of operation;
- m. noise/vibration, fumes and the siting of plant and machinery;
- n. the storage and disposal of refuse and customer litter;
- o. tables and chairs outside of premises;
- p. community safety;
- q. the expansion of the customer area into ancillary areas such as basements;
- r. the ability to change the use of premises from one food and drink use or one entertainment use to another (within Use Classes A3, A4, A5 and D2); and

- s. the use of local management agreements to ensure that the vicinity of premises are managed responsibly to minimise impact on the surrounding area.

Contributions to schemes to manage the off-site effects of a development, including for town centre management, will be sought in appropriate cases.

- 9.35 New shops, services, food, drink and entertainment uses can add to the vitality and vibrancy of Camden's centres and local areas. However, they can also have other impacts such as diverting trade and displacing existing town centre functions. As a result, the Council will seek to guide such uses to locations where their impact can be minimised. When assessing proposals for these uses, the Council will seek to protect the character and function of our centres. The Council will prevent any reduction in vitality and viability of the centres by requiring sequential assessments and impact assessments where appropriate (in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework) and through implementing this policy.
- 9.36 The Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the character, amenity, function, vitality and viability of a centre or local area. We consider that harm is caused when an impact is at an unacceptable level, in terms of:
- trade and turnover;
  - vitality and viability;
  - the character, quality and attractiveness of a centre;
  - levels of vacancy;
  - crime and antisocial behaviour;
  - the range of services provided; and
  - a centre's character and role in the social and economic life of the local community.
- 9.37 We will consider the cumulative impact of additional shopping floorspace (whether in a centre or not) on the viability of other centres and the cumulative impact of non-shopping uses on the character of the area. The Council will consider cross boundary impacts of shopping provision, both how provision in Camden affects neighbouring boroughs and how provision in neighbouring boroughs affects Camden.
- 9.38 The supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on town centres, retail and employment provides detailed guidance on how we will treat planning applications for shops, food, drink and entertainment uses in particular centres, taking into account their specific circumstances. Camden Planning Guidance on town centres, retail and employment also provides information on when we consider that concentrations of food, drink and entertainment uses, and reductions in the proportion of premises in retail use, would be likely to cause harm to the character, function, vitality and viability of a centre. We will take these and any other relevant supplementary guidance into account when we assess applications in these locations. We will also take into account any history of vacancy in shop units and the prospect of achieving an alternative occupier for vacant premises when considering proposals that involve the loss of retail premises.

**Food, drink and entertainment uses**

- 9.39 Within each of Camden's centres, the Council will seek to prevent concentrations of uses that would harm an area's attractiveness to shoppers or its residential amenity. The Council wishes to see a wide range of entertainment uses within its centres, not just those that primarily involve drinking and will encourage suitable uses that contribute towards this.
- 9.40 Where food, drink and entertainment uses are permitted, they will need to be managed to protect the amenity of residents. To ensure such uses do not harm amenity or the character of an area, either individually or cumulatively, we will consider applying controls on:
- hours of operation;
  - refuse and litter;
  - noise/vibration;
  - fumes;
  - customer area;
  - local management issues; and
  - changes of use.
- 9.41 Where appropriate, we will use planning conditions or obligations to ensure that any remaining impact is controlled. "Policy A1 Managing the impact of development" sets out further measures to manage the impact of development on amenity.
- 9.42 The Council will seek to ensure that community safety issues associated with proposals are fully addressed. As well as appropriate design measures, the Council will seek financial contributions towards management arrangements, including street wardens, CCTV, town centre management and other community safety schemes through the use of planning conditions and obligations, where appropriate. Camden's Statement of Licensing Policy sets out the Council's approach to licensing and the expectations that the Council and the Metropolitan Police have for those involved in licensed activities.
- 9.43 The supplementary planning document Camden Planning Guidance on town centres, retail and employment provides further advice on the impact of food, drink and entertainment uses and provides detailed guidance on how we will consider applications for such uses in each centre.

**Other town centre uses**

- 9.44 A number of uses commonly found in centres (and smaller shopping parades) are not included in the A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1a, D1 or D2 Use Classes. These include amusement arcades, launderettes, saunas and massage parlours, car showrooms and minicab offices. While centres are generally the most appropriate location for these uses, the Council will carefully consider their potential impact when assessing planning applications to make sure that they do not harm the centre or the amenity of neighbours.
- 9.45 Particular issues that may arise include emissions and noise (e.g. from launderettes), highway and traffic problems (e.g. from minicab offices and car showrooms) and community safety and the fear of crime (e.g. from amusement arcades, betting shops, massage parlours and saunas, particularly where there are concentrations of such uses). Amusement arcades, massage parlours and

saunas are unlikely to be considered acceptable in the busiest parts of centres or near to housing, schools, places of worship, hospitals or hotels.

### **Health impacts**

- 9.46 In line with the National Planning Policy Framework the Council believes that the planning system can play an important role in facilitating healthy communities. One issue of particular importance in the borough is childhood obesity. The Council seeks to tackle this issue and encourage healthy eating habits. The Council is undertaking a range of programmes aimed at improving the food environment in the borough. While the causes of obesity are complex there is evidence to support that energy dense fast food is one of a number of contributing factors to obesity. The Council will therefore consider the health impacts of the development of new hot food take aways in the borough.

### **Betting shops, payday loan stores and pawnbrokers**

- 9.47 The number of betting shops, payday loan stores and pawnbrokers has increased in Camden. The Council considers that a proliferation of these uses could damage the character, vitality and viability of town centres. The Council will therefore monitor the number and impact of betting shops, payday loan stores, and pawnbrokers over the plan period and consider whether evidence shows there is a need to introduce limits on such uses in the future.