

Other Town Centre Needs

In addition to retail needs the Shopping and Centres Study also assesses the need for other main town centre uses. For the avoidance of doubt this conforms with the NPPF and considers the following uses:

- Leisure, entertainment facilities and 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).

The Shopping and Centres Study concludes there is potential for Coventry to increase its market share of cinema trips meaning it could support an additional cinema. It also highlights that there could be scope for about two additional health and fitness clubs by 2031. In contrast, it suggests there is no quantitative need for additional theatre facilities, tenpin bowling, bingo or nightclubs. However, qualitative improvements should not be discouraged within designated centres.

In response to this level of need, existing permission already exist for a new city centre cinema as part of the City Centre South proposals, whilst further health and fitness facilities are planned at Bishop Street and as part of the proposed City Centre Sports and Leisure Destination. Any further proposals for Main Town Centre uses will be considered in accordance with Policies R3 and R4 of this Plan.

Coventry's Centres Hierarchy

The NPPF supports the identification of designated town centres as well as a centres hierarchy. The centres hierarchy in Coventry has evolved over time and is refreshed further through the policies in this Local Plan. This reflects the need to promote a vibrant and viable centres hierarchy that is able to respond to the changing needs of local communities.

Coventry city centre will remain at the top of the centres hierarchy. It is the main comparison shopping destination and the main focus for employment, leisure, entertainment and cultural activities. However, investment within the city centre has not kept pace with development in district centres and retail parks or other competing towns and cities such as Birmingham, Solihull and Leicester. This is highlighted by the city centre ranking 58th on the national ladder (according to the venue score index), with Leicester ranked 17th and Birmingham ranked 3rd. This is despite the city being classed the 13th largest in the country and the fastest growing outside London. With this in mind there is a clear need to invest in the city centre's retail offer to strengthen its role at the top of the hierarchy. Alongside this Local Plan, the Council will also adopt a City Centre AAP which will consider the city centre and its specific policies in more detail. Although the wider city centre boundary is shown on the Policies Map¹, the Primary Shopping Area and primary and secondary frontages will be designated through the Area Action Plan.

Policy R2: Coventry City Centre – Development Strategy

1. The city centre will continue to be developed and regenerated to ensure it is a truly world class city centre, leading in design, sustainability and culture. This will be achieved by:
 - a) Enhancement of its position as a focus for the entire sub-region and as a national and international destination to live, work and play;
 - b) Enhancement of its retail and leisure offer to strengthen the city's sub-regional role;
 - c) Provision of high-quality office space;
 - d) Becoming a hub for education;
 - e) Including a variety of places to live which cater for different needs;
 - f) Preserving or enhancing the character and setting of the historic built landscape and the archaeological environment;
 - g) A connected public realm including public squares and green spaces, easily accessible through the creation of desirable and legible pedestrian routes;
 - h) Accessible for all;
 - i) Providing an attractive and safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;
 - j) Provide a high-quality public transport system that benefits from seamless integration and is well connected to existing and new infrastructure;
 - k) High quality sustainable built design;
 - l) Continuing to develop a vibrant and attractive night time economy;
 - m) Providing opportunities to improve health and wellbeing;
 - n) Continuing to support greater integration of the university within the wider city centre in accordance with the policies in the Area Action Plan;
 - o) Recognising and preserving key views to the iconic three spires of St Michaels, Holy Trinity and Christchurch;
 - p) Supporting the reintroduction of green and blue infrastructure throughout the city centre, including opportunities for deculverting wherever possible.
2. An Area Action Plan will be developed to help deliver this strategy and support and guide development within the city centre.

5 This is the area that will be covered by the City Centre Area Action Plan