Retail Position Statement

Autumn 2022

South Ribble Borough Council

Contents

Introduction

Despite the migration to out-of-town shopping, town, district and local centres continue to have an important role to play in any district. They form a focal point for the community and provide a wide range of services that are accessible to the whole population including retail, employment, leisure, residential, education and transport. It is important to maintain and protect the vitality and viability of the retail centres.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which includes an economic role.

The NPPF requires that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, it requires local planning authorities to;

- Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;
- Define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;
- Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas;
- Promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer, and which reflect the individuality of town centres;
- Retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones, ensuring that markets remain attractive and competitive.

It further requires Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to ensure that the Local Plan is based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. LPAs should ensure that their assessment of and strategies for housing, employment and other uses are integrated, and that they take full account of relevant market and economic signals. They are required to work with partners to prepare and maintain a robust evidence base to understand both existing business needs and likely changes in the market.

Core Strategy Policy 11 sets out South Ribble's shopping hierarchy of centres, showing Leyland town centre as the principal shopping area in the Borough, followed by the district centres of Bamber Bridge, Longton, Tardy Gate and Penwortham. In addition, there is a network of supporting Local Centres within the Borough. The boundaries for the Town, District and Local centres can be viewed in the Local Plan (2015), as well as the relevant policies for how development in the retail centres will be managed. The policies that cover the retail centres are E3 – Leyland Town Centre, E4 – District Centres, and E5 – Local Centres.

The introduction of significant numbers of non-retail uses into town centres, particularly primary retail frontages, and the smaller district and local centres, such as banks, building societies and other professional activities, can introduce breaks in the continuity of retail frontages. These 'dead frontages' can be visually disruptive and may be discouraging to shoppers.

They can also reduce the choice of units available to retailers, fragmenting and weakening the established shopping centres and making them less vibrant places. The Local Plan document seeks to maintain a minimum of 60% of A1 retail uses in the Leyland Primary Retail Frontage, and in all the identified town, district and local centres.

This document provides a ‘snapshot’ in time of the situation in the retail centres in the Borough and builds on previous survey work to enable comparative analysis to be undertaken and trends to be identified. This report is feeding into the evidence base of the evolving Local Development Framework and will identify early signs of change and the type of action that should be taken. The statistics contained within the report will also assist during the planning application process, as the document should be used to inform as to whether the targets set are being met.

Revoked Use Classes	Current Use Classes
A1	E(a), E(c)
A2	E(c)
A3	E(b)
A4	Sui Generis
A5	Sui Generis
B	E(g)
D1	E(e), E(f), Sui Generis
D2	E(d), F2, Sui Generis

(Adapted from: Planning Portal, https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes)

It should be noted that the use class order has now be revised from 1 September 2020, referring to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). The table above displays the changes and the most closely associated current use classes.

Leyland Town Centre

Leyland is regarded as the main shopping centre in South Ribble. Leyland Town Centre comprises the shopping core of Hough Lane and the southern Towngate area, which features a Tesco Extra superstore, and the Churchill Retail Park. Leyland offers an extensive range of both convenience and comparison goods and services.

The Central Lancashire Core Strategy (adopted July 2012) identifies Leyland Town Centre in the retail hierarchy as a second tier centre, also known as a principal town centre.

It is important that Leyland retains its status within the retail hierarchy, remains competitive with its neighbours, and continues to attract shoppers, visitors and businesses to the town. Whilst it is accepted that people will go to other centres for certain products, it is important that the town builds on its strengths, recognises and alleviates its weaknesses and improves the facilities that it provides to the community.

Policy E3 of the Local Plan applies to Leyland Town Centre.

Uses in the Town Centre

The Local Plan identifies a primary retail frontage for Leyland Town Centre, and a secondary retail area. Within the primary retail frontage, Policy E4 requires that a minimum of 60% of the units are of A1 use. The policy also encourages A3 and A4 uses, and permits other uses, such as A2 and B1 uses, subject to a six month marketing assessment.

The secondary retail frontage covers the remainder of the town centre. Within the secondary retail area, the policy encourages A1, A3 and A4 uses. Changes of use for other uses, such as A2 or B1, should be accompanied by a six month marketing assessment to provide evidence for this change of use.

The uses of all of the ground floor units in the town centre boundary are recorded. The latest survey, undertaken in October 2022, identified 303 units in the town centre, with 70 in the primary retail frontage.

The table below shows the number of each use class in both the primary retail frontage and the town centre as well as the percentage of units this represents.

	Leyland Town Centre		Leyland Primary Retail Frontage	
Use	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Vacant	13	4	6	9
E(a)	72	24	21	30
E(b)	20	7	8	11
E(c)	75	25	18	26
E(e)	15	5	3	4
E(g)	1	0	0	0
C3	53	18	0	0
F1	5	2	1	1
F2	3	1	0	0
Sui Generis	45	15	13	19

Town Centre

The table above shows that there is a wide range of uses in the town centre, with the predominant use in the town centre being E(c), with 25% of units being in this use class.

24% of units are in E(a) uses, and 18% of units in the town centre are residential.

The vacancy rate is lower than that in the primary retail frontage at 4%. Sui Generis and E(b) units make up 22% of units in the town centre combined.

Primary Retail Frontage

The table above shows that the predominant use in the primary retail frontage is E(a), at 30%, which identical than the previous year, corresponding to A1 uses. The number of E(c) uses is also significant, at 26%. The vacancy rate in the primary retail frontage is has increased from 6% (October 2021) to 9%.

Analysis of Vacancies in the Town Centre and Primary Retail Frontage

It is important to monitor the vacancy rates in town and district centres. A key part of this monitoring is to look at what uses are leaving the centres, resulting in vacant units.

The table below shows the previous uses of the units in the town centre and the primary retail frontage that were vacant during the October 2022 survey.

	Leyland Town Centre		Leyland Primary Retail Frontage	
Use	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
E(a)	3	23	0	0
E(c)	9	69	6	100
C3	1	8	0	0

More than half of the vacant units in the town centre were previously in E(c) use (69%). Additionally, 100% of the units within the primary retail frontage that are now vacant were previously in E(c) use. The previous use of the unit would be a consideration if the Council received an application for change of use.

Comparison of Uses Over Time

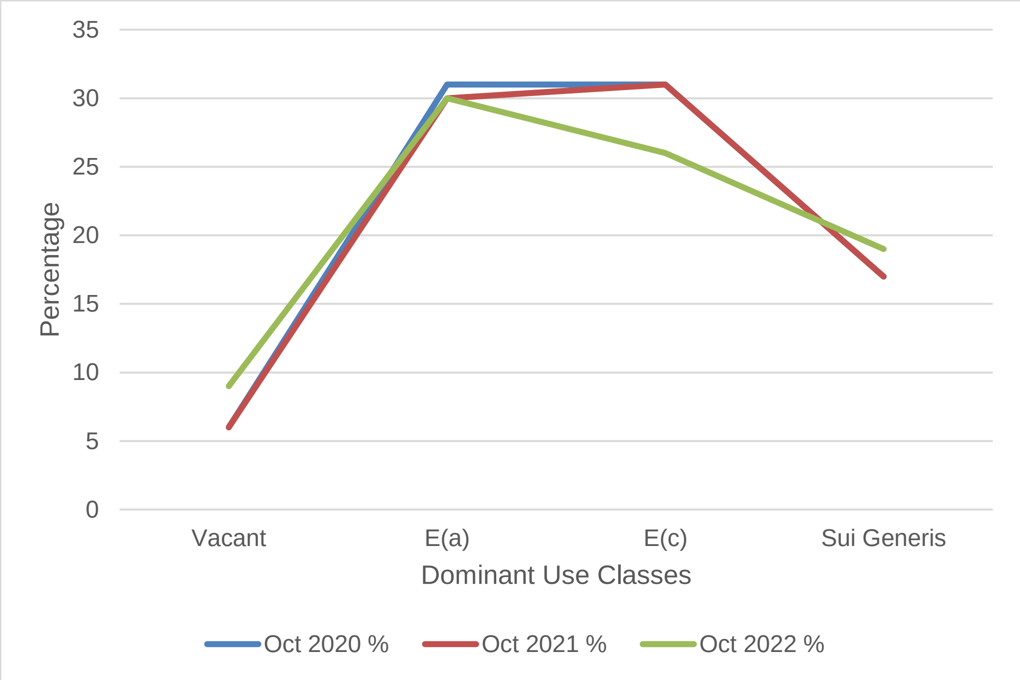
Primary Retail Frontage

The table below shows how the uses in the primary retail frontage have changed since October 2015.

Revoked Use Classes	Oct 2015 %	Oct 2016 %	Oct 2017 %	Oct 2018 %	Oct 2019 %	Current Use Classes	Oct 2020 %	Oct 2021 %	Oct 2022 %
Vacant	4	1	3	6	6	Vacant	6	6	9
A1	49	51	51	48	43	E(a)	31	30	30
A2	29	28	25	25	27	E(c)	31	31	26
A3	4	4	4	4	7	E(b)	9	9	11
D1	3	3	3	0	3	E(e)	4	6	4
						F1	1	1	1
B1	0	0	0	0	0	E(g)	0	0	0
D2	1	1	1	1	1	F2	0	0	0
Sui Generis	1	1	1	1	1	Sui Generis	17	17	19
A4	4	4	6	6	7				
A5	4	6	6	6	4				
C3	0	0	0	0	0	C3	0	0	0

*use classes changed September 2020, but rows have been correlated as closely as possible

The changes in the main uses in the primary retail frontage from 2020 to 2022 are displayed in the chart below.



The table and chart show that there has not been a great deal of fluctuation in the uses in the primary retail frontage since October 2020. The vacancy rate increased from 6% in October 2020 and October 2021 to 9% in October 2022.

The number of E(a) uses has decreased slightly from 31% to 30%. There has been a decrease in the number of E(c) units in the primary retail frontage from 31% in October 2020 to 26% in October 2022.

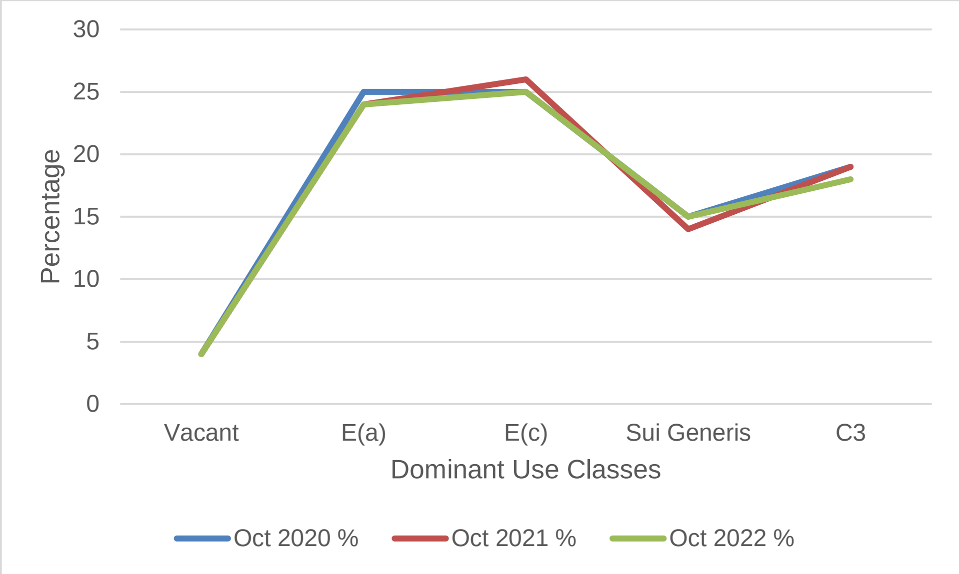
The number of E(b) units has increased slightly between these dates, whilst the number of E(e) units have decreased slightly. The number of Sui Generis uses in the primary retail frontage has risen to 19% in October 2022.

Leyland Town Centre

The table below demonstrates how the uses in Leyland Town Centre have changed since October 2015.

Revoked Use Classes	Oct 2015 %	Oct 2016 %	Oct 2017 %	Oct 2018 %	Oct 2019 %	Current Use Classes	Oct 2020 %	Oct 2021 %	Oct 2022 %
Vacant	8	6	6	8	4	Vacant	4	4	4
A1	39	40	41	39	39	E(a)	25	24	24
A2	14	13	12	13	11	E(c)	25	26	25
A3	5	4	4	4	4	E(b)	5	5	7
D1	4	4	4	4	5	E(e)	4	5	5
						F1	2	2	2
B1	2	1	1	1	2	E(g)	1	1	0
D2	2	2	2	2	3	F2	0	0	1
Sui Generis	2	3	2	2	2	Sui Generis	15	14	15
A4	2	4	3	2	4				
A5	7	8	7	8	8				
C3	17	17	17	17	18	C3	19	19	18

The changes in the main uses in the town centre from 2020 to 2022 are displayed in the chart below.



The table and chart show clearly that there has not been a great change in any of the uses in the Town Centre since October 2020. The number of vacant units in the centre has remained the same, whilst the number of E(a) units has decreased slightly. Whereas E(b) uses have increased, along with E(e).

District Centres

There are 4 district centres in the Borough, as identified in the Local Plan (2015). The district centres are spread across the Borough and offer a range of facilities for the wider community. Policy E4 of the Local Plan Document applies to the district centres.

Uses in the District Centres

Policy E4 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that 60% or more of the units in the district centres are of A1 use. A3 uses are also encouraged. Applications for other uses would need to include a six month marketing assessment to provide evidence for a change of use from A1.

The district centres were surveyed in October 2022 and November 2022. The results are displayed in the table below.

	Penwortham		Bamber Bridge		Longton		Tardy Gate	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Vacant	1	1	2	3	4	10	3	5
E(a)	20	22	16	22	12	30	12	22
E(b)	12	13	3	4	2	5	3	5
E(c)	29	31	20	28	14	35	16	29
E(d)	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
E(e)	7	8	3	4	4	10	8	15
E(g)	0	0	2	3	1	3	0	0
C3	5	5	16	22	0	0	3	5
F1	1	1	2	3	2	5	0	0
F2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sui Generis	16	17	8	11	1	3	9	16

Penwortham

Penwortham is the largest district centre in the Borough with 93 units. Of these, 22% are E(a), and 31% are E(c). The vacancy rate is 1%, the lowest across the district centres. Penwortham has a relatively low proportion of residential units in the centre, at 5%. It also has the highest proportion of Sui Generis uses at 17% against the other district centres.

Bamber Bridge

There are 72 units within Bamber Bridge district centre. Of these, 22% are of E(a) use, and vacancy rates are currently 3%. E(c) uses make up the majority of units with 28%. The centre has the highest proportion of residential units in the district centres at 22%.

Tardy Gate

There are 55 units within Tardy Gate district centre. The centre has the same proportion of E(a) units as Penwortham and Bamber Bridge, at 22%. It however, also has the highest percentage of E(e) uses at 15%. Vacancy rates and residential uses are each 5% of units in the centre. Sui generis uses make up 16% of the district centre.

Longton

Longton is the smallest district centre in the Borough, with 40 units. Of these, 30% are in E(a) use and 35% of units are E(c) use, which is the highest proportion across the district centres. Longton is the only district centre to not have any residential units. The vacancy rate is currently 10%, the highest amongst the district centres.

Summary

Across the district centres the dominant uses at E(a) and E(c), and for Bamber Bridge this includes C3. All centres have several E(b) uses, with Penwortham holding the greatest proportion. Tardy Gate is the only centre not to include either F1 or F2 uses. Sui Generis uses are particularly dominant in Penwortham.

Analysis of Vacancies in District Centres

The table below sets out the previous uses of the units which were identified as vacant in the November 2022 surveys.

	Penwortham		Bamber Bridge		Longton		Tardy Gate	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
E(a)	0	0	0	0	1	25	2	66
E(b)	0	0	0	0	2	50	0	0
E(c)	1	100	1	50	1	25	1	33
Sui Generis	0	0	1	50	0	0	0	0

The only vacant unit in Penwortham was previously in E(c) use. The two vacant units in Bamber Bridge were previously occupied by E(c) and Sui Generis uses. The four vacant units in Longton were previously occupied by E(a), E(b), and E(c) uses. In Tardy Gate, two of vacant units were E(a) and one was formerly E(c). Therefore, the most common previous use of the vacant units was E(c).

Local Centres

The Local Plan identifies 9 Local Centres in the Borough. These centres are spread across the Borough, and, although small, provide a vital service to the communities they serve. Policy E5 of the Local Plan Document applies to local centres.

Uses in the Local Centres

It is important that the vitality and viability of these centres is retained, through maintaining the retail strength that they offer. The composition (recorded November 2022) of each of the local centres is split over the 3 tables below.

	Kingsfold		Earnshaw Bridge		Farington	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Vacant	0	0	1	5	2	9
E(a)	6	15	2	10	3	14
E(b)	3	8	3	14	0	0
E(c)	8	21	5	24	5	23
E(e)	5	13	0	0	0	0
F1	1	3	0	0	0	0
C3	11	28	4	19	4	18
Sui Generis	5	13	6	29	8	36

Kingsfold

Kingsfold is the largest local centre in the Borough, with 39 units. The centre is residential dominant with 28% of units being C3. It has a high proportion of E(e), the highest figure along with Walton-Le-Dale for this use. Moreover, 15% of units are E(a), and 21% are E(c). The centre has a vacancy rate of 0 and 13% are Sui Generis uses. Only Kingsfold and Higher Walton have F1 uses within their centres.

Earnshaw Bridge

There are 21 units in Earnshaw Bridge local centre. Of these, one is vacant. The highest proportion of units are Sui Generis at 29%. 24% of these are E(c) uses, and there is 10% E(a) uses. 19% of the units are residential and 14% of the units are of E(b) use, the largest proportion across the local centres.

Farington

There are 22 units in Farington local centre.14% of these are in E(a) use. The centre also has the highest number of units (36%) in Sui Generis use across the local centres. 9% of units in the centre are vacant. Other units in the centre are comprised of E(c) (23%) and C3 (18%).

	Higher Walton		Seven Stars		Walton-Le-Dale	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Vacant	1	5	6	18	0	0
E(a)	2	10	10	30	0	0
E(b)	0	0	1	3	0	0
E(c)	5	25	9	27	6	26
E(e)	0	0	0	0	3	13
F1	1	5	0	0	0	0

C3	7	35	1	3	11	48
Sui Generis	4	20	6	18	3	13

Higher Walton

Higher Walton local centre comprises of 20 units, of which 10% of units are in E(a) use. There are a high number of residential properties in the centre, at 35%. There is one vacant unit in the centre. Only Kingsfold and Higher Walton have F1 uses within their centres. 25% of units are E(c) and 20% are Sui Generis.

Seven Stars

There are 33 units in this centre. 30% of these are in E(a) use and E(c) uses make up 27%. Vacant units make up 18% of the centre, as the centre with the highest vacancy rate. In comparison, there are few residential units, at 3%.

Walton Le Dale

There are 23 units in Walton Le Dale centre. The predominant use in this centre is residential, with almost half of the units (48%) being in this use. This is the only centre which has no E(a) units. E(c) units make up 26% of the centre, whilst E(e) and Sui Generis units each make up 13% of the centre. There are no vacant units.

	Gregson Lane		New Longton		Walmer Bridge	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Vacant	2	15	0	0	0	0
E(a)	1	8	5	45	4	22
E(b)	1	8	1	9	1	6
E(c)	4	31	4	36	4	22
E(e)	1	8	1	9	0	0
C3	2	15	0	0	5	28
Sui Generis	2	15	0	0	4	22

Gregson Lane

There are 13 units in Gregson Lane local centre. Of these 31% are in E(c) use. A further 15% of units are in Sui Generis, the same as C3 uses. E(e) uses make up 8% and 15% of units are vacant.

New Longton

New Longton is the smallest local centre in the Borough, with 11 units. It is also the centre with the highest proportion of E(a) units (45%) and E(c) units (36%). E(b) and E(e) uses make up 9% each of the centre. There are no vacant units in this centre.

Walmer Bridge

There are 18 units in Walmer Bridge local centre. E(a), E(c) and Sui Generis each make up 22% of units. A further 28% of units are in C3 use, and 6% are E(b). There are no vacant units.

Analysis of Vacancies in Local Centres

The table below sets out the previous uses of the units which were identified as vacant in the November 2022 surveys. Those centres without vacant units are not displayed.

	Earnshaw Bridge		Farington		Gregson Lane		Higher Walton		Seven Stars	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
E(a)	1	100	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	17
E(c)	0	0	1	50	1	50	1	100	1	17
E(e)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	33
Sui Generis	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0	2	33

Overall, there are 12 vacant units across South Ribble's local centres. Seven Stars has the highest number of vacant units followed by Gregson Lane and Farington then Higher Walton and Earnshaw Bridge. The table shows that current vacant units were previously either E(a), E(c), E(e) or Sui Generis. E(c) is the most common previous use across all units.

Conclusion

Whilst it is challenging to evaluate the results against the revoked use class targets, conclusions can be still drawn of the vitality of the centres. The former class A1 now refers to E(a) and E(c), therefore an assumption can be made on the 60% minimum target. If so, then only Longton and New Longton would be meeting the target if units meet the revoked use classifications. Policy E4 of the Local Plan also encourages A3 now directly E(b) and A4 which is now contained in the Sui Generis class. These are more prominent in district centres, especially Penwortham.

In some centres in the Borough, particularly Bamber Bridge, Higher Walton and Walton-Le-Dale, there are a high number of residential properties. A high number of residential uses in the centres could make it extremely difficult to meet the target retail policies of Local Plan. Further work may be needed to look at how the targets can be met in these situations.

Vacancy rates in the centres are generally relatively low, although vacancy rates in Longton and Seven Stars are the highest. This will need to be kept under review as there may be an issue with vacant units being filled in these centres, or existing uses moving out of these centres.

Appendix 1: Current Use Classes

Class B

- B2 General Industrial
- B8 Storage or distribution

Class C

- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential Institutions
- C2A Secure Residential Institution
- C3 Dwelling Houses
- C4 Houses in Multiple Occupation

Class E- Commercial, Business and Service

- E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food
- E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises
- E(c) Provision of:
    - E(c)(i) Financial services
    - E(c)(ii) Professional services
    - E(c)(iii) Other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality
- E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness
- E(e) Provision of medical or health services
- E(f) Creche, day nursery or day centre
- E(g) Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity
    - E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions
    - E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes
    - E(g)(iii) Industrial processes

Class F- Local Community and Learning

- F1 Learning and non-residential institutions
    - F1(a) Provision of education
    - F1(b) Display of works of art
    - F1(c) Museums
    - F1 (d) Public libraries or public reading rooms
    - F1(e) Public halls or exhibition halls
    - F1(f) Public worship or religious instruction
    - F1(g) Law courts
- F2 Local Community
    - F2(a) Shops selling essential goods, including food, where the shop's premises do not exceed 280 square metres and there is not other such facility within 1000 metres
    - F2(b) Halls or meeting places for the principle use of the local community
    - F2(c) Areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation
    - F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or skating rinks

Sui Generis

- Theatres
- Amusement arcades/centres or funfairs
- Launderettes
- Fuel stations
- Firing, selling and/or displaying motor vehicles
- Taxi business
- Scrap yards or a yard for the storage/distribution of minerals and/or the breaking of motor vehicles
- ‘Alkali work’
- Hostels
- Waste disposals installations for the incineration, chemical treatment or landfill of hazardous waste
- Retail warehouse clubs
- Nightclubs
- Casinos
- Betting offices/shops
- Pay day loan shops
- Public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments
- Drinking establishments with expanded food provision
- Hot food takeaways
- Venues for live music performances
- Cinemas
- Concert halls
- Bingo halls
- Dance halls

Further information can be found here https://www.planningportal.co.uk/permission/common-projects/change-of-use/use-classes