

Newham Local Plan

**Evidence Base:
Town Centres Update – 2021 data**

February 2023

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Introduction

This document updates and extends the data contained within [Evidence Base: Town Centres v2](#) (July 2015) and the Town Centres Update (June 2019). The data therefore provides an updated baseline from which to assess a proposal's compliance with the requirements of policy SP9 of the Newham Local Plan (2018).

This update does not alter the policies or spatial allocations/designations contained within the [Local Plan \(2018\)](#), but will assist in the application of town centre-related policies, and the development of new policies as part of the [Local Plan Refresh](#).

Local Plan policy INF5 defines town centres boundaries across the Borough and sets out to strategically manage them as part of a hierarchy and infrastructure network, seeking qualitative improvements that reflect their current and projected roles (as per policies S2-6) in providing access to shopping, services, employment (INF5, J1) and community facilities (INF8).

Integral to achieving Local Plan town centre visions is the management of cumulative impacts through the application of policy SP9 which seeks to:

- Secure a robust retail core by ensuring that within Primary Shopping Frontages (PSF, as shown on the Policies Map 2018) at least **70%** of units are in A1 use.
- Secure a high quality leisure offer by ensuring that at least **67%** of town centre leisure uses are D2, A4 or A3 and that betting shops, amusement arcades and takeaways (A5) account for no more than 33%.

Context

From 1 September 2020 the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 came into effect. A new use class E (Commercial, Business and Service uses) brings together many of the town centre uses that the Local Plan policies above address. Some leisure uses have become Local Community Uses (F2 Use Class). These Regulations also moved some uses, particularly noise generating leisure uses, out of the previous use classes and into the "Sui Generis" (SG) category. The changes are summarised in the table below.

Use description	Pre Sep 2020 use class	Post Sep 2020 use class
Shops	A1	E(a)
Cafes and restaurants	A3	E(b)
Financial and professional services	A2	E(c)
Pubs and drinking establishments	A4	Sui Generis
Takeaways	A5	Sui Generis
Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls	D2	Sui Generis
Community halls	D2	F2 (b)

Use description	Pre Sep 2020 use class	Post Sep 2020 use class
Gyms	D2	E(d)
Indoor sports and recreation	D2	F2(c)
Betting shops and adult arcades	Sui Generis	Sui Generis

Changes of use to or between Sui Generis uses always requires planning permission.

Change of use within the same use class (e.g. Class Ea to Eb) will not require planning permission unless an existing planning condition limits the use on the site.

Monitoring of uses within town centre frontages will remain important to understanding market-led changes in composition and the extent to which the policy targets remain achievable and enforceable.

The Authority Monitoring Reports provide further quantitative and qualitative data on the Borough's town and local centres.

Methodology

The data contained within this document was derived from town centre surveys undertaken from August to December 2021. It reflects the boundaries of town centres as adopted through the Local Plan in December 2018. Note that the data for Stratford does not reflect the area that falls under the planning control of the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC).

It should also be noted that the Use Classes assigned through the survey work are indicative of the observations on the day of survey and should not be taken as a confirmation of lawful use. Additionally, the data may have been superseded by further changes of use since the time of survey.

Nevertheless, the survey data provides the most accurate snapshot of the mix of uses within Newham's town centres, being more robust, detailed and up-to-date than information held by other databases such as Experian / GOAD.

Note that percentages may not sum due to rounding.

Appendix 1 provides definitions for terms used in this report.

Stratford Metropolitan Town Centre

Robustness of the Retail Core:

Total number of units in PSF	86
Total number of units in PSF that are vacant	6
Total number of units in PSF in Ea Use Class	59
Percentage of Ea uses in PSF	68.6%

Stratford Shopping Centre comprises the PSF for Stratford Town Centre and presents a healthy retail core in spite of strong competition from Stratford City (Westfield). This in part is due to the different, complementary offer. The percentage of retail uses in the PSF is slightly below the requirement of policy SP9. Three Use Class E units inside the Stratford Shopping Centre are vacant, as is the Morgan House office building (3 units).

Quality Leisure Benchmark:

Leisure Use		Number of uses	Percentage of total
Subject to policy control	Takeaways (SG)	5	9.8%
	Arcades (SG)	2	3.9%
	Betting Shops (SG)	5	9.8%
	Subtotal	12	23.5%
Quality focus	Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls (SG)	2	3.9%
	Restaurants/cafes (Eb)	24	47.1%
	Pubs (SG)	9	17.6%
	Community halls (F2b)	1	2.0%
	Gyms (Ed)	0	0.0%
	Indoor sports and recreation (F2c)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	36	70.6%
Other identified	Theatres (SG)	2	3.9%
	Night Clubs (SG)	1	2.0%
	Subtotal	3	5.9%
TOTAL		51	100.0%

As a Metropolitan Town Centre, Stratford provides a greater variety of leisure uses compared to Newham's other town centres, such as theatres and a night club, and a variety of food and drink destinations, including some innovative temporary mixed offers such as Pitch and Roof East (counted here as primarily Sui Generis pub uses).

Betting shops, arcades and hot food takeaway businesses remain below the town centre requirement of policy SP9 3aii. The overall quality of the leisure offer meets policy SP9 criteria.

East Ham Town Centre

Robustness of the Retail Core:

Total number of units in PSF	97
Total number of units in PSF that are vacant	2
Total number of units in PSF in Ea Use Class	71
Percentage of Ea uses in PSF	73.2%

East Ham PSF is currently within SP9 targets of 70% of the units being retail (Ea) use. The vacancy rate in the PSF is low, with only two units not in use.

Quality Leisure Benchmark:

Leisure Use		Number of uses	Percentage of total
Subject to policy control	Takeaways (SG)	17	29.3%
	Arcades (SG)	2	3.4%
	Betting Shops (SG)	9	15.5%
	Subtotal	28	48.3%
Quality focus	Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls (SG)	0	0.0%
	Restaurants/cafes (Eb)	26	44.8%
	Pubs (SG)	3	5.2%
	Community halls (F2b)	0	0.0%
	Gyms (Ed)	0	0.0%
	Indoor sports and recreation (F2c)	1	1.7%
Subtotal	30	51.7%	
Other identified	Theatres (SG)	0	0.0%
	Night Clubs (SG)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	0	0.0%
TOTAL		51	100.0%

In spite of being the second largest centre in the Borough after Stratford, quality leisure and cultural facilities in East Ham centre are not well established. The percentage of quality leisure is well below policy targets, whilst those uses subject to control dominate and remain in high concentration. Quality leisure uses should be encouraged to further bolster East Ham's status as a Major Centre, not least to enhance its night-time/ evening economy offer.

Canning Town Town Centre

Robustness of the Retail Core:

Total number of units in PSF	20
Total number of units in PSF that are vacant	5
Total number of units in PSF in Ea Use Class	8
Percentage of Ea uses in PSF	40.0%

Canning Town's Primary Shopping Frontage has been established since 2015/16. However, vacancies in the frontages around Rathbone Market remain high. Further supporting retail uses will be important to achieving a robust retail core as defined by policy SP9.

Quality Leisure Benchmark:

Leisure Use		Number of uses	Percentage of total
Subject to policy control	Takeaways (SG)	3	10.0%
	Arcades (SG)	1	3.3%
	Betting Shops (SG)	4	13.3%
	Subtotal	8	26.6%
Quality focus	Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls (SG)	0	0.0%
	Restaurants/cafes (Eb)	18	60.0%
	Pubs (SG)	2	6.6%
	Community halls (F2b)	1	3.3%
	Gyms (Ed)	1	3.3%
	Indoor sports and recreation (F2c)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	22	73.3%
Other identified	Theatres (SG)	0	0.0%
	Night Clubs (SG)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	0	0.0%
TOTAL		30	100.0%

Canning Town is demonstrating a healthy mix of leisure uses as defined by policy SP9. However, the overall leisure offer remains more limited than Newham's other town centres, reflective of its ongoing transformative development. Further quality leisure uses should be encouraged to enhance the available offer as part of an overall healthy mix of uses within the town centre.

Forest Gate Town Centre

Robustness of the Retail Core:

Total number of units in PSF	31
Total number of units in PSF that are vacant	1
Total number of units in PSF in Ea Use Class	22
Percentage of Ea uses in PSF	71.0%

Forest Gate PSF benefits from a robust retail core, in line with SP9 targets. Vacancy rates are low, and site at 39A to 49A Woodgrange Road has been cleared ahead of redevelopment which will deliver a new town centre frontage (16/02395/FUL) including floorspace for a medium-sized food store (in line with Policy S6 requirement for Forest Gate) and a smaller retail unit.

Quality Leisure Benchmark:

Leisure Use		Number of uses	Percentage of total
Subject to policy control	Takeaways (SG)	17	41.5%
	Arcades (SG)	0	0.0%
	Betting Shops (SG)	5	12.2%
	Subtotal	22	53.7
Quality focus	Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls (SG)	0	0.0%
	Restaurants/cafes (Eb)	15	36.6%
	Pubs (SG)	3	7.3%
	Community halls (F2b)	1	2.4%
	Gyms (Ed)	0	0.0%
	Indoor sports and recreation (F2c)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	19	46.3%
Other identified	Theatres (SG)	0	0.0%
	Night Clubs (SG)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	0	0.0%
TOTAL		41	100.0%

The mix of leisure uses within Forest Gate Town Centre falls below the policy benchmark of policy SP9, with 'subject to control' uses continuing to comprise over half of all leisure uses within the centre. Cafes and restaurants units (Eb use) form the largest focus leisure use within the centre, helping to counterbalance the number of takeaways by providing alternative eating/drinking destinations. However the overall number of Eb uses has fallen.

Green Street Town Centre

Robustness of the Retail Core:

Total number of units in PSF	196
Total number of units in PSF that are vacant	12
Total number of units in PSF in Ea Use Class	165
Percentage of Ea uses in PSF	84.2%

Green Street PSF exceeds policy SP9 expectations in terms of the robustness of its retail core. Vacancy rates within the PSF also remain low, reflective of the strength of the centre as a major destination for specialist food and non-food shopping.

Quality Leisure Benchmark:

Leisure Use		Number of uses	Percentage of total
Subject to policy control	Takeaways (SG)	13	25.5%
	Arcades (SG)	2	3.9%
	Betting Shops (SG)	5	9.8%
	Subtotal	18	35.3%
Quality focus	Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls (SG)	0	0.0%
	Restaurants/cafes (Eb)	29	56.9%
	Pubs (SG)	1	2.0%
	Community halls (F2b)	1	2.0%
	Gyms (Ed)	1	2.0%
	Indoor sports and recreation (F2c)	1	2.0%
Subtotal	33	64.7%	
Other identified	Theatres (SG)	0	0.0%
	Night Clubs (SG)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	0	0.0%
TOTAL		51	100.0%

The mix of leisure uses within Green Street remains slightly below the target of policy SP9. Restaurants and Cafes (Eb uses) make up the majority of quality focus leisure uses; however, there remains scope to improve the quality, quantity and mix of the leisure offer to better relate to the size of the town centre.

East Beckton Town Centre

Robustness of the Retail Core:

Total number of units in PSF	15
Total number of units in PSF that are vacant	2
Total number of units in PSF in Ea Use Class	8
Percentage of Ea uses in PSF	53.3%

Beckton East PSF is defined by the Mary Rose Mall which is dominated by the ASDA Superstore and a small parade of shops, therefore the typology results in a disproportionate effect on ratios. Whilst policy SP9 targets are not met, as previous surveys have indicated, the town centre is performing well with very little change in operators and no long-term vacancies. The only vacancies identified at the time of the 2021 survey was that of the former police centre, released by the Mayor's Office for Policing as part of an overhaul of the wider policing estate, and the former betting shop.

Quality Leisure Benchmark:

Leisure Use		Number of uses	Percentage of total
Subject to policy control	Takeaways (SG)	0	0.0%
	Arcades (SG)	0	0.0%
	Betting Shops (SG)	1	20.0%
	Subtotal	1	20.0%
Quality focus	Cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls (SG)	0	0.0%
	Restaurants/cafes (Eb)	1	20.0%
	Pubs (SG)	2	40.0%
	Community halls (F2b)	0	0.0%
	Gyms (Ed)	1	20.0%
	Indoor sports and recreation (F2c)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	4	80.0%
Other identified	Theatres (SG)	0	0.0%
	Night Clubs (SG)	0	0.0%
	Subtotal	0	0.0%
TOTAL		5	100.0%

As with the PSF, the wider East Beckton town centre is characterised primarily by several large floorplate buildings (Premier Inn, the Beckton Globe, St Marks Church) reflecting its past as an out-of-centre retail park. Again, the small number of units has a disproportionate effect on ratios for leisure. While the quantity and diversity of leisure offer in the town centre remains low, the mix meets the benchmark of policy SP9. Careful assessment will continue to be required on the cumulative effects of increasing leisure uses in the out-of-centre retail parks of the wider Beckton area.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

‘Other’ leisure uses: uses that fall outside of the above definitions which are generally less representative of Newham’s current town centre offer (e.g. theatres and night clubs).

Primary Shopping Frontage (PSF): defined within the Local Plan (2018) as ‘likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods.’ See boundaries on [Policies Map 2018](#).

Primary Shopping Area (PSA): defined by the NPPF as ‘an area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage)’. See boundaries on [Policies Map 2018](#). In some centres the PSA and the PSF are the same.

‘Quality’ leisure use: as defined by policy SP9 3a.ii, uses within former Use Classes D2, A4 and A3, many of which are now Sui Generis. The uses are restaurants and cafes (Eb Use Class), pubs, cinemas, concert halls, dance halls, bingo halls

‘Subject to control’ leisure use: as defined by policy SP9 3a.ii, hot food takeaways (formerly A5 Use Class, now Sui Generis), betting shops (Sui Generis Use Class) and amusement arcades (Sui Generis Use Class) that require careful monitoring due to their potential cumulative impact.

Unit: as defined in relation to street naming and numbering. New units may be created through subdivision of a property (e.g. 2a and 2b) or redevelopment. Units are different to frontages (frontages are a reflection of the part of a building façade associated with a unit, so for example a subdivided unit may result in 2 units and two half frontages).

Use: the observed primary Use Class of the business surveyed; note that this may take up more than one unit (as defined above), and will not reflect ancillary uses.