

Local and District Centres and Local Shops

- 7.37 This policy seeks to support a balanced mix of uses to help local centres thrive as hubs for daily shopping and social interaction, reinforcing their role as focal points within the community.

Policy PR4 – Local and District Centres and Local Shops

1. District Centres

There are two district centres in the borough, Milnrow and Castleton. To maintain and improve on the quality of these centres, development will be expected to:

- a. Be of an appropriate scale, character and function consistent with the position of the centre in the hierarchy set out in policy PR1; and
- b. Not have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions or the surrounding environment which could not be overcome by the imposition of conditions

2. Local Centres

Rochdale hosts a network of 32 local centres serving the day-to-day needs of local areas as defined on the policies map. Development in local centres will be expected to:

- a. Maintain an appropriate balance of key uses for that local centre;
- b. Generate a reasonable level of footfall and be of public interest or service;
- c. Not harmfully dominate or fragment the centres retail frontage;
- d. Include a shopfront with a display function; and
- e. Demonstrate that any proposal seeking for the conversion of a vacant commercial premises to residential development will assist regeneration. The centre must also have a high overall vacancy rate

Where there is a proposal for shops which fall outside the designated boundary of a town, district and local centre, or is proposed within a new large-scale housing or employment development, the development must:

- f. Be of an appropriate scale and within a location that is not, or will not be, reasonably served by an existing centre or local shop or service provision within a 400m boundary;
- g. Not unduly affect the amenity of nearby residents or other uses; and
- h. Be well-connected to the surrounding area having regard to active travel routes to reduce the need for vehicular trips.

Places for Everyone Links:

Policy JP-P4 New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres

Reasoned Justification

- 7.38 Neighbourhoods across Rochdale are generally well served by a network of district and local centres. These centres offer accessible and convenient facilities for residents,

typically located within walking and cycling distance and are well connected by high-frequency public transport routes. The boroughs district and local centres will continue to be protected and enhanced to ensure a suitable range of local services are maintained to provide for everyday needs.

- 7.39 District centres are smaller than town centres, usually comprising a varied group of shops and services, often containing at least one supermarket. District centres are not limited to sole retail use and will also contain other services which serve the immediate community such as pharmacies, cafes, restaurants, petrol filling stations and takeaways.
- 7.40 Local centres are the lowest on the hierarchy therefore the smallest of the boroughs identified centres. They serve purely local needs, often accessed by residents on foot. Local centres typically offer a variety of shops providing everyday essentials such as groceries and fresh food, alongside key services like post offices and pharmacies. They often feature specialist or independent retailers that enhance the character and uniqueness of each centre. In addition, cafés, pubs, and financial services contribute to their vibrancy and community appeal.
- 7.41 Both of the borough's district centres have a range of shops together with appropriate supporting non-retail facilities and services which collectively form a coherent shopping experience for the local catchment. The retail emphasis in district centres is largely on food and other convenience goods though both host a good level of comparison retailers as well as smaller independent shops.
- 7.42 Covering the east of the borough and set within the Pennines township, Milnrow district centre is considered a suitable location for the diverse range of uses it hosts, recognising its role in serving a more limited catchment area in comparison to the borough's main town centre. Milnrow has remained economically autonomous with a well performing centre for a number of years. The function and role of Milnrow will continue to be protected to provide for shopping needs and other key services and facilities.
- 7.43 Castleton is a vibrant district centre providing a good mix of retailers. There are ambitious plans for Castleton which encompass the district centre boundary, as highlighted in the Castleton Station Area Masterplan, which represents a strategic priority for the Council. The Masterplan details residential and business opportunities with excellent transport links, including into Manchester City Centre. Castleton has also benefitted from planned transport infrastructure as part of Phase 1 of the Greater Manchester Bee Network strategy, with major improvements to Manchester Road from Castleton Railway Station to The Royal Toby Hotel.
- 7.44 Local centres are integral to community life, facilitating a limited but functional range of services to residents, thereby reducing the need to travel for everyday essentials. The borough hosts a network of 32 local centres, each of a different size, character and condition. Some local centres encompass residential development at ground floor level, whilst others have residential properties on upper floors. Conversion of vacant commercial premises to residential could be beneficial in some centres providing it is in line with policy PR2, which aims to target and boost regeneration. Local centres will

likely be appropriate in larger scale residential and employment development to assist regeneration. The scale and character should be consistent with its surroundings, having regard to local amenity and connectivity to the community it is serving.