

# The Management of Designated Shopping Frontages in Southend-on-Sea - Technical Report

November 2016





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# 1 Introduction

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- 1.1 This report has been written as a technical paper to appraise and further evidence the emerging approach to managing primary and secondary shopping frontages in Southend-on-Sea Town Centre, which is being progressed by the Southend Central Area Action Plan (SCAAP).
- 1.2 The report presents the findings of a new retail survey (July 2016) for the Town Centre.
- 1.2 The current adopted planning policy approach to managing designated shopping frontages in Southend is set out by saved Policy S5 of the Southend-on-Sea Borough Local Plan ('Local Plan') (1994).
- 1.3 Proposed Policy DS1 of the emerging SCAAP, once adopted, will replace Policy S5 and provide the new definitive approach to managing both primary and secondary shopping frontages in the Town Centre.
- 1.4 These emerging shop front policies have been informed by the Southend Town Centre and Retail Study (2011), the Southend Core Strategy (2007), national policy and guidance, consultation responses and sustainability appraisal. The SCAAP and associated evidence base can be viewed on the Southend Borough Council's (the Council's) website via the relevant planning pages: [www.southend.gov.uk/scaap](http://www.southend.gov.uk/scaap)

## 2 Purpose of Report

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- 2.1 The report presents the findings a comprehensive survey that provides a health check of the Town Centre, examining the use classes and vacancy rates across both Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages.
- 2.2 The retail survey was carried out in July 2016. The use class<sup>1</sup> of each unit was recorded together with the number and location of vacant units within each frontage area.
- 2.3 A commentary on the results to the survey is outlined herein. Comparison is also made between:
  - a. the Primary Shopping Frontage (Primary Frontage) as currently defined by the Local Plan (1994) and accompanying Proposals Map; and
  - b. those proposed amendments to these designations being brought forward by the emerging SCAAP and accompanying Policies Map.
- 2.4 The report also examines the appropriateness and extent of Secondary Shopping Frontages (Secondary Frontage) within the Central Area, which are also being progressed in the SCAAP.

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<sup>1</sup> Use Classes Order 1997 (as amended)

### 3 Background

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- 3.1 There is wide consensus that the nature of our town centre's and high streets are changing. The perception that the traditional high street is failing to adapt to the demands of today's consumer society is something which has been widely publicised. Factors including the rise of online retailing, the loss of revenue to out-of-town shopping centres, and a reduction in consumer spending during economic downturns are all contributing factors which can lead to an increase in the number of vacant shop units<sup>2</sup>. However, there is evidence to suggest that, despite competition from internet and out-of-town retail, town centres still hold their own and are in particular important destinations for shopping<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.2 Ultimately, while the rate of growth of internet retailing has been impressive in recent years the vast majority of retailing in the UK still happens in 'bricks and mortar' shops. According to National Statistics, the total volume of retail sales in real terms by online channels accounted for less than 9% per annum<sup>4</sup>. Town centres and high streets are therefore still a necessity; however it is the way in which they function that is likely to undergo adaptation in order to meet the changing needs of the consumer. One interpretation of this is that high streets of the future will 'continue to produce income for business interests, but not just through selling goods to walk-in customers. Services such as coffee shops and beauty salons, which cannot be replicated on the internet, will continue to thrive'<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, in a move away from the traditional composition of the high street, the review conducted by Mary Portas in 2011 recommended that high streets become 'multifunctional and social places which offer a clear and compelling purpose and experience that's not available elsewhere'<sup>6</sup>.
- 3.3 The Government's Response to the Portas Review<sup>7</sup> outlined the importance of ensuring diverse and competitive town centres which do not solely rely on retail, and suggested that the planning system do everything it can to ensure the viability and vitality of our town centres. Indeed, planning policies should be in place to actively support and encourage thriving town and other centres with vibrant, diverse high streets where people want to shop, socialise and spend time interacting.

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<sup>2</sup> GENECON & Partners, for Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Dec 2011. Understanding High Street Performance. <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/business-sectors/docs/u/11-1402-understanding-high-street-performance.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> British High Streets: from Crisis to Recovery. Economic & Social Research Council. <http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/GBHS-British-High-Streets-Crisis-to-Recovery.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> The Changing Face of UK retail in today's multi-channel world. Experian, March 2011. <https://www.hitpages.com/doc/6320224898908160/1#pageTop>

<sup>5</sup> Cliff Guy: 'Propping up a failing sector?' Town & Country Planning, 2012, vol. 81, April, pp 171-173.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Portas: The Portas Review: An Independent Review into the Future of Our High Streets. Dec. 2011. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6292/2081646.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6292/2081646.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Communities and Local Government. High Streets at the Heart of our Communities: the Government's Response to the Mary Portas Review. March 2012.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/7525/2120019.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7525/2120019.pdf)

- 3.4 For Southend Borough Council, it is important to gain an accurate picture of the current composition and ‘health’ of the town centre in order to understand how they currently function and how best to plan for their future. The Southend Town Centre and Retail Study (2011)<sup>8</sup> provides an assessment of the health of the main centres in the Borough. This Technical Report presents the findings of an up-to-date use class survey of both primary and secondary shopping frontages, which should be read alongside the Council’s main retail and town centre study.

## National Context

- 3.5 A key principle of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published March 2012, is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development<sup>9</sup> through the promotion of competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer which reflects the individuality of town centres<sup>10</sup>. In drawing up Local Plans local planning authorities should recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality<sup>12</sup>. In order to achieve this, the Council is expected to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and should make it clear which uses will be permitted in such locations through the use of development management policies<sup>12</sup>.
- 3.6 National Planning Practice Guidance (‘the Guidance’) outlines that local planning authorities should adopt a ‘town centre first’ approach. Local planning authorities should take full account of relevant market signals when they are planning for town centres. Such market signals should be identified and analysed in terms of their impacts on town centres, and this information should be used to inform policies that are responsive to changes in the market and the changing needs of businesses. The Guidance outlines that not all successful town centre regeneration projects have been retail led or involved significant new development – improvements to the public realm, transport and accessibility and other measures can also play important roles.

## Temporary Uses

- 3.7 Under permitted development rights buildings in specific Use Classes, including A1 Retail, are able to change to a number of alternative Use Classes, either for a temporary period or indefinitely. However, there will remain instances where prior approval applies as part of the permitted development or the change of use of a building does not constitute permitted development and would require the granting of planning permission. Nevertheless, the NPPF, in paragraph 23, is clear that “*local planning authorities should: ... define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear*

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<sup>8</sup> The Southend Town Centre and Retail Study (2011).

[http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/296/retail\\_study](http://www.southend.gov.uk/downloads/download/296/retail_study)

<sup>9</sup> NPPF paragraph 17.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> NPPF paragraph 23



*definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations".*

## Local Context

- 3.8 At a local level, the Core Strategy (2007)<sup>11</sup> contains the main strategic policy relating to the Town Centre. Core Strategy policy CP2 'Town Centre and Retail Development' sets out the retail hierarchy and network of centres within the Borough, which establishes the Town Centre as the first preference for all forms of retail development and for other town centre uses attracting large numbers of people.
- 3.9 The Town Centre performs a vital retail function for the wider area that it serves, contributing to the local economy and prosperity of the town. It is important that frontages within the centre are appropriately managed to ensure that the retail character and function of the centre as a whole is not significantly eroded as they are important for local economic vitality and contribute to creating sustainable communities.
- 3.10 In addition to policy CP2, the Council also applies policies contained in the 1994 Local Plan relating to retail development within the town centre. In particular the approach to managing primary and secondary shopping frontages is currently set out by saved Policy S5 of the Local Plan, with the frontage designations defined on the accompanying Proposals Map. However, as already stated, it is proposed that this saved policy will be replaced by Policy DS1 as proposed in the emerging SCAAP, and the Policies Map amended appropriately.
- 3.11 In order to set and apply an effective town centre policy, it was necessary to understand the current condition and health of the centre and to determine whether or not the primary or secondary frontage designations applied under the 1994 Local Plan remain appropriate for maintaining a healthy centre over the new plan period. In accordance with the NPPF, any management mechanisms proposed within the policies that seek to protect the role and function of the town centres must be sustainable, realistic and based on robust evidence.
- 3.12 Primary frontages can be appropriate locations for a range of non-retail uses including food and drink establishments and financial services such as banks. These uses are complementary to the retail function of the primary frontage adding to their attraction, and encouraging multi-purpose journeys. However, an over-concentration of non-retail uses within the primary frontage can detract from its shopping function and may prejudice its vitality and viability, create extensive lengths of "dead" frontage and a lack of proper shop window displays. This can detract from the attractiveness of the street to shoppers or isolate particular shops or areas from the main pedestrian flows. It is therefore necessary to manage the shopping function of centres to ensure their vitality and viability is not significantly harmed.

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<sup>11</sup> Southend-on-Sea Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Dec 2007).  
[http://www.southend.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1540/core\\_strategy\\_dpd1.pdf.pdf](http://www.southend.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1540/core_strategy_dpd1.pdf.pdf)



- 3.13 Secondary frontages often contain retail uses but can also offer a greater diversity of other business uses that provide important services for the areas that they serve. It is therefore important that the character and function of these secondary frontages are maintained and enhanced as they provide a vital service, meeting the day-to-day needs of local communities.
- 3.14 The location and extent of the primary and secondary shopping frontages in the Town Centre is set out on the Local Plan Proposals Map (Figure 1). The emerging SCAAP has reviewed and proposed amendments to some of these boundaries (Figure 2).
- 3.15 The purpose of this paper is to present the findings of an up-to-date retail survey to further examine the composition of respective frontages across the Town Centre in terms of the types of use, and to compare those existing frontage designations outlined by the Local Plan Proposals Map to those frontage designations being progressed by the SCAAP and its Policies Map, including a presentation of the amendments being sought.

## 4 Results of the Retail Surveys

### Retail Survey Town Centre

- 4.1 Table 1 sets out the results of the retail survey conducted in July 2016 for the town centre<sup>12</sup>. The total length of frontage surveyed (primary and secondary) for the town centre was approximately 4,800m. The results suggest that there are a good range of uses within Southend Town Centre, with approximately 67% of the combined frontage in retail use (A1) and 17% of the length of frontage in use for eating and drinking (A3-A5).

Table 1: Use Class Survey of Southend Town Centre (Sum of all Primary and Secondary Frontages as per the proposed SCAAP)

Use Class	% Total Frontage
A1	66.8%
A2	7.1%
A3	12.2%
A3/A4	2.7%
A4	1.3%
A5	1.2%
B1	0.9%
C1	0.4%
D1	2.2%
D2	1.5%
Sui Generis	3.7%
Total	100%

### Existing Planning Policy Position for managing Primary Shopping Frontage

#### Saved Policy S5 Local Plan (1994)<sup>13</sup>

- 4.2 Primary Frontages are areas within centres that are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses. However, national guidance does not go to the extent of defining exactly what constitutes a 'high proportion' of retail uses. This is for each local planning authority to determine, and should be based on clear evidence.
- 4.3 The Primary Frontages in Southend are currently designated and managed according to national policy and the Local Plan 1994 and accompanying Proposals Map. Saved Policy S5: 'Non-Retail Uses' (see Appendix A), relates to all primary and secondary frontages

<sup>12</sup> The results for the Town Centre is the sum of all primary and secondary frontages.

<sup>13</sup> Southend-on-Sea Borough Local Plan (1994). Saved Policy Policy S5: Non-Retail Uses. [http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200449/saved\\_planning\\_policies/495/southend-on-sea\\_borough\\_local\\_plan/6](http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200449/saved_planning_policies/495/southend-on-sea_borough_local_plan/6)

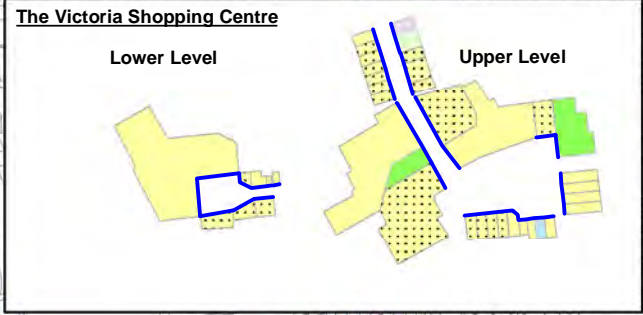
within the Borough. The policy sets out criteria that a planning proposal needs to satisfy in order for a change of use proposal to be granted in areas of primary frontage. The main emphasis of this policy is to protect the proportion of retail use within the frontage and safeguard its character. Figure 1 below depicts the location of all primary and secondary frontages as per the Local Plan 1994.

- 4.4 According to the Use Class Order (1987) (Amendment 2010) (England), a retail use is classified as 'A1' and can include, for example, a clothes shop, a post office, a hairdresser's or a charity shop, amongst others. Once a shop has permission for an 'A1' use, it can freely become any type of shop which falls under that use class, for example, a butcher's may become a hairdresser's without requiring planning permission. It is therefore beyond the scope of the planning system to determine who occupies a unit with a specific use class.
- 4.5 A key criteria of Saved Policy S5 relates to Primary Frontage and states that within these areas permission will not normally be granted where a proposal results in the proportion of frontage remaining in retail use (Use Class A1) falling below 80% within either the individual street block or the centre as a whole. The primary objective of this policy requirement is to maintain a high proportion of retail uses within designated primary frontages.
- 4.6 Table 2 below shows the existing Local Plan proportion of primary frontage, measured in terms of length, which is currently in retail (Use Class A1) use. The primary frontage of Southend Town Centre is currently composed of 73% retail (A1) and 27% non-retail uses. This is based on the frontage length of the ground floor units measured in metres. Despite the town centre primary frontage retail (A1) proportion falling below the Local Plan 80% A1 threshold, these findings demonstrate that the Local Plan polices have ensured the maintenance of what is considered to be a 'high proportion' of retail (A1) use across the Town Centre PSF Area, in line with the NPPF definition.
- 4.7 Saved Policy S5 does not include any target for maintaining a proportion of retail use within secondary frontages.

Table 2 Current Retail (A1) percentage per Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontage (Saved Local Plan designations)

Southend-on-Sea Local Plan Primary Shopping Frontage	Criteria target (%) set out in Local Plan – Saved Policy S5	Percentage of frontage classified as A1 Retail (Retail Survey July 2016)
Southend Town Centre	80%	73%





**Key**

- |                               |    |       |    |    |    |             |
|-------------------------------|----|-------|----|----|----|-------------|
| — Primary Shopping Frontage   | A1 | A3    | A4 | B1 | D1 | SUI GENERIS |
| — Secondary Shopping Frontage | A2 | A3/A4 | A5 | C1 | D2 | Vacant      |

## Vacancies

- 4.8 The proportion of vacant street level property provides a strong indication of the health of primary shopping frontages. It should, however, be considered with a degree of caution as vacancies can arise even in the strongest town centres, particularly where properties are undergoing alterations or extensions.
- 4.9 The national town centre vacancy rate was 8.7% in January 2016, down from the 9.1% rate reported in October 2015. This is the lowest reported rate since reporting the data in July 2011<sup>14</sup>. However, since then vacancy rates have increased nationally to 10.1% (July 2016)<sup>15</sup>, the highest vacancy rate nationally since April 2015.
- 4.10 Table 3 below outlines the vacancy rate for the Southend Town Centre and within designated primary and secondary frontages. There are approximately 400 units within the town centre. The proportion of these that are vacant is 13%, which is higher than the national average of 10.1%.
- 4.11 The vacancy rate is higher within designated primary frontages (14.9%) than compared to secondary frontages (10.1%). This may reflect the tighter planning policy controls for primary frontage (e.g. application of the 80% A1 retail target) or merely reflect the likely higher rents experienced within the former and the local demand for these type of premises. Encouragingly, the vacancy rate within the designated primary frontage has reduced from 19% (March 2013) to 14.9% (July 2016) and this trend has been experienced nationally.
- 4.12 It should be noted that of the 52 vacancies within the town centre, 26 of these were in The Victoria shopping centre, which was extensively refurbished creating a number of new units and additional floorspace in 2008, the year which marked the onset of economic recession in the UK. Indeed, the vacancy rate of the town centre minus those frontages in The Victoria shopping centre is only 8.0% (5.3% in terms of length of frontage), which is below the national average of 10.1%.

Table 3 Vacancy rates – Town Centre (Saved Local Plan designations) (July 2016)

	Town Centre	Primary Frontage	Secondary Frontage
	% units vacant	% units vacant	% unit vacant
Southend Town Centre	13%	14.9%	10.1%

<sup>14</sup> BRC/ Springboard Footfall and Vacancies Monitor – January 2016: <http://www.springboard.info/mediaLibrary/images/english/114004.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> BRC/ Springboard Footfall and Vacancies Monitor – July 2016: via <http://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2016/08/july-footfall-declines-as-shop-vacancies-edge-above-10-percent>

## Commentary

4.13 The Local Plan has been successful in ensuring that primary frontages within the town centre maintain a high proportion of retail uses. However, the current proportion of retail uses is below the 80% Policy S5 target and the vacancy level across the town centre is above the national average, although as stated this is primarily due to the large number of vacancies within The Victoria Shopping Centre, which have never been let since their creation in 2008.

## Emerging Policy Position

4.14 As explained above, Saved Policy S5 is being replaced by emerging policies in the SCAAP. Proposed Policy DS1 of the emerging SCAAP outlines the Council's proposed approach to managing primary shopping frontages in the town centre.

4.15 In response to the higher than national average number of vacancies and results of the use class surveys, the proposed SCAAP includes amendments to the primary and secondary designations, as compared to the Local Plan (1994). These amendments are highlighted in figure 2 below, and the results of the use class survey for the new proposed primary frontages being brought forward by the SCAAP are set out in Table 4.

4.16 It is important that the Town Centre is attractive, well-designed and well managed, with a good mix of uses for shoppers and visitors, and is able to provide a focal point for business and social interactions. This is a matter that was highlighted by the Portas Review (2011), which emphasises that shopping should be just one part of a rich mix of activities within Town Centres<sup>16</sup>.

4.17 The SCAAP proposes alterations to the existing Local Plan Primary Frontage designations to concentrate them to the main high street and to the ground floor of the two shopping centres. This approach seeks to provide a balance between protecting the retail function and vitality of the centre, whilst allowing for the potential diversification of the wider Town Centre. Table 4 details the alterations to secondary frontage being brought about via the SCAAP as compared to the Local Plan (1994).

4.18 Within the Town Centre a number of primary frontages that are not located on the main High Street or within the ground floor of the two respective shopping centres (The Victoria and The Royals) have been replaced by secondary frontages. This has resulted in an approximate 40% reduction in the length of primary frontage (3,025m vs. 1,716m).

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<sup>16</sup> Portas, Mary (2011) The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets.



Table 4: Amendments proposed to Secondary Shopping Frontage Designation as being progressed by the SCAAP Policies Map.

Ref	Location	Reason
Town Centre 1	All Primary Frontages that are not located on the main High Street or within the ground floor of the two respective shopping centres (The Victoria and The Royals) have been replaced by secondary frontages.	Seeks to provide focus on protecting the retail function and vitality of the core Town Centre, whilst allowing for the potential diversification of the wider centre.
Town Centre 2	Alteration of Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontage on the western edge of the southern High Street, between Heygate Avenue and Pier Hill, to Secondary Shopping Frontage.	A number of units along this stretch are not currently occupied by A1 retail, the units are small in nature and it is considered that this section has the potential to provide a vibrant and diverse transition between the high street and the central seafront.
Town Centre 3	Alteration of Town Centre Secondary Shopping Frontage to remove a section of York Road (Former Market). Opposite numbers 28 to 56 York Road.	Previous units and frontage demolished and replaced with temporary car park. Note: this area is part of a wider SCAAP proposed site for mixed-use development, including retail.

4.19 The reduction in Primary Shopping Frontage being brought forward by the SCAAP will provide for a more flexible approach in managing A1 retail use across the town centre. Firstly, approximately 40% of the primary frontage designated by the BLP will convert to secondary frontage and therefore can freely change to non-A1 retail uses; secondly the reduction in primary frontage results in the remaining proportion of A1 uses increasing from 73.3% (Local Plan primary frontage designation) to 86.8% (proposed primary frontage within the SCAAP) (See Table 5). Importantly, this approach will maintain a retail function in the core town centre.

Table 5: Use Class survey for proposed SCAAP Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontage (July 2016)

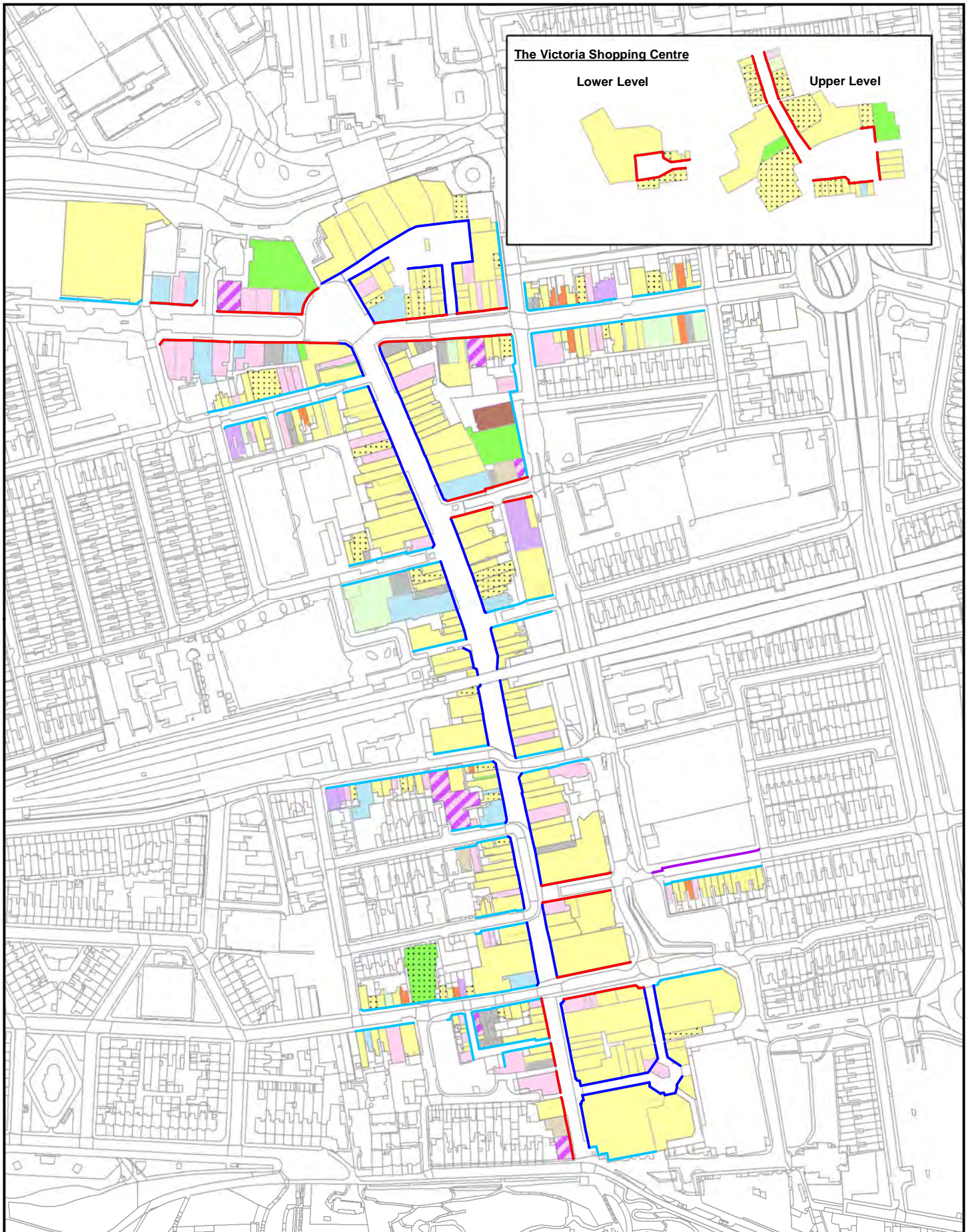
Class	Proportion of Town Centre Primary Frontage within Use Class
A1	86.8%
A2	5.2%
A3	6.5%
A3/A4	0.0%
A4	0.0%
A5	0.0%
B1	0.0%
C1	0.0%
D1	0.0%
D2	0.2%



Sui Generis	1.3%
Total length	1,716m
Of Which Vacant	5.3%

*Vacancy rate in terms of proportion of units = 8.5%*

**Figure 2**  
**Amendments proposed to Town Centre Shopping Frontages,**  
**from existing Local Plan (1994) to SCAAP**



**Key**

— Primary Shopping Frontage (Unchanged)	— Primary changed to Secondary	A1	A3/A4	B1	D2
— Secondary Shopping Frontage (Unchanged)	— Secondary de-designated	A2	A4	C1	SUI GENERIS
		A3	A5	D1	Vacant

- 4.20 The primary frontage is concentrated on the traditional linear High Street which is supported to the north by The Victoria shopping centre and to the south by The Royals shopping centre. The entire High Street length measures approximately 0.5 miles, a considerable distance.
- 4.21 The Victoria and The Royals Shopping Centre's are home to a number of key anchor retail stores, however, they are located to the periphery of the main high street, providing an important transition between retail shopping and the residential neighbourhoods and civic function to the north (of The Victoria), and the leisure and recreational uses of the central seafront to the south (of The Royals). The western edge of the southern section of the high street leading to Pier Hill is proposed to be classified as secondary frontage as a number of units along this stretch are not currently occupied by A1 retail, the units are small in nature and it is considered that this section has the potential to provide a vibrant and more diverse transition between the high street and the central seafront and complement the Royals Shopping Centre.
- 4.22 It is considered that the primary shopping frontage of the town centre comprises three inter-related distinct zones, the High Street, The Victoria Shopping Centre and The Royals Shopping Centre. Each of these zones should maintain a core retail function, but also be able to provide for a range of supporting town centre uses, particularly Class A3 restaurants and café uses, in order to enhance the experience for visitors and help towards achieving a low vacancy rate within the area.
- 4.23 The result of the use class survey for the 3 respective areas is provided in Table 6 below and depicted on the map at Appendix C. It is evident that the proportion of primary frontage within A1 retail use is high for the 3 town centre zones and the vacancy rate within each is low<sup>17</sup>.

Table 6: Use Class survey for proposed SCAAP Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontage – The High Street; The Victoria Shopping Centre; The Royals Shopping Centre (July 2016)

Class	Proportion of Primary Frontage in Use Class		
	High Street	Victoria Shopping Centre	The Royals Shopping Centre
A1	81.2%	91.2%	95.8%
A2	8.2%	3.2%	0.0%
A3	7.9%	5.5%	4.2%
A3/A4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
A4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
A5	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
B1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
C1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

<sup>17</sup> Below the national average of 10.1% (July 2016): <http://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2016/08/july-footfall-declines-as-shop-vacancies-edge-above-10-percent>

D1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
D2	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Sui Generis	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Length (m)	944	367	405
% Vacant Frontage	7.2%	4.6%	1.4%
% Vacant Units	9.8%	6.9%	4.5%

*\* Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding*

4.14 Table 7 examines the percentage difference between the current surveyed proportion of retail A1 of the 3 respective Town Centre proposed zones<sup>18</sup> and four different potential A1 retail policy targets.

4.15 As a starting point, the Local Plan (1994) target of 80% (Policy S5) was tested for the town centre primary shopping frontage. It was considered that this provided a limited degree of flexibility for all town centre primary frontage, or within each of the proposed town centre zones. A target of 70% was therefore tested, however this still resulted in a relatively low degree of flexibility overall, and for the High Street proposed town centre zone in particular.

4.16 The target of 60% when tested provided a stronger degree of flexibility for all town centre primary shopping frontage and within each of the proposed town centre zones respectively, as set out in Table 7. This provides over 20% of flexibility within all zones, and the town centre primary frontage as a whole and importantly would maintain the primacy of retail units within the primary frontage.

4.17 A target threshold of 50% was then tested to provide further comparison. This provided a more significant degree of flexibility, 36% for all town centre primary shopping frontage, and over 45% in The Royals Shopping Centre for example.

4.18 In order to maintain retail primacy within the 3 zones whilst allowing for a diversification in current uses, it is considered a 60% policy target for A1 retail is appropriate. This would potentially allow the following reduction in A1 retail frontage within the three zones:

- High Street: 21.1% of existing A1 retail frontage could change to non-A1;
- The Victoria Shopping Centre: 31.2%;
- The Royals Shopping Centre: 35.9%.

4.19 Applying the 60% policy target to the 3 zones of primary frontage, rather than all the primary frontage within the town centre as whole, ensures that there is not an overconcentration of non-A1 within a certain section of the Town Centre, or conversely that each zone maintains a primacy of A1 retail frontage (i.e. 60%).

<sup>18</sup> The High Street; The Victoria's Shopping Centre; and The Royals Shopping Centre



Table 7: Difference between the current surveyed proportion of retail A1 frontage of the 3 respective Town Centre proposed zones and four different potential A1 retail policy targets.

	All Town Centre Primary Frontage	High Street	Victoria Shopping Centre	The Royals Shopping Centre
<b>Current A1 %</b>	<b>86.82</b>	<b>81.12</b>	<b>91.24</b>	<b>95.85</b>
Difference from target 80%	6.82	1.12	11.24	15.85
Difference from target 70%	16.82	11.12	21.24	25.85
Difference from target 60%	26.82	21.12	31.24	35.85
Difference from target 50%	36.82	31.12	41.24	45.85

## 5 Conclusion

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- 5.1 The new approach to managing shopping frontages in the town centre being brought forward by the emerging SCAAP recognises that, for town centres to thrive they need to diversify, but also still maintain a retail function to attract shoppers and encourage footfall.
- 5.2 For Southend town centre, proposed SCAAP Policy DS1 seeks to manage the designated primary frontages within 3 distinct zones<sup>19</sup> so that the proportion of retail use does not fall below 60% for each. This approach not only seeks to secure the retail emphasis and focus of these frontages by setting a percentage target, whilst allowing for an increase in supporting non-retail town centre uses as compared to the existing policy approach (80%), but also recognises that these primary frontages are crucially supported by adjacent secondary frontages, which do not include a retail percentage target and therefore allows for further diversification of the town centre and its offer.
- 5.3 It is worth noting that the total length of primary and secondary frontage proposed in the SCAAP is 4,830m (1,716m Primary and 3,114m Secondary). Hypothetically, if 40% of the primary frontage did turn into non-retail A1 use (686m), and all secondary frontage was non-A1 retail (3,114m), which could be allowed by the emerging SCAAP Policy DS1, then 79% of the entire designated primary and secondary frontage across the Town Centre could be in non-retail A1 use. Clearly this allows for a considerable scope for a diversity of uses, whilst importantly maintaining at least 60% of retail use within the 3 town centre primary shopping frontage zones.
- 5.4 Furthermore, it is important to understand that Southend's town centre is perpendicular and well connected to the central seafront area. The central seafront area represents an important visitor destination in its own right, comprising a range of leisure uses, such as Southend Pier, and award winning public spaces, including City Beach, which together with the town centre supports a wider multifunctional Central Area within Southend that offers a unique and diverse visitor/ shopper experience. This area is the subject of the SCAAP.

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<sup>19</sup> The High Street; The Victoria's Shopping Centre; and The Royals Shopping Centre

## Appendix A – Saved Local Plan (1994) Policy S5

### **POLICY S5 - NON-RETAIL USES**

#### [Primary Shopping Frontages \(as defined on the Proposals Map\)](#)

The Borough Council recognises the contribution which certain non-retail uses can make to the attraction of shopping centres. However, in order to safeguard Primary Shopping Frontages from undue interruption to their principal function of retailing goods and to maintain their character and vitality, permission will normally only be granted where:

- (i) the proposed use is appropriate to a Primary Shopping Area and falls within Classes A2 or A3 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987\*;
- (ii) non-retail uses remain dispersed throughout the shopping centre and no concentration of such uses would occur in any part of it;
- (iii) the dominant retail element and continuity of shopping frontages with varied and changing window displays are maintained throughout all parts of the centre;
- (iv) other shops would not be isolated from the bulk of the shopping frontage or from the main pedestrian flows.

In assessing whether these criteria are satisfied, the Council will have regard to the type of shopping centre, the location of the premises within the centre, the number of non-retail units in the vicinity and in the centre as a whole, the proportion of frontage occupied by them and the known views of shoppers and traders in the centre.

Permission will not normally be granted where proposals would result in:

- (i) more than two single non-retail units (or equivalent) being located immediately adjacent to each other; or
- (ii) the proportion of frontage (measured in terms of length of frontage) remaining in retail use falling below 80% within either the individual street block of the centre as a whole; or
- (iii) residential amenities being adversely affected by way of noise, disturbance or the emission of smells and fumes.

Where, however, a proposed use falls within Class A3 and is likely to sustain or increase the activity, interest and attractiveness of a shopping area, the Council may consider relaxing the limits set out in (i) and (ii) above, subject to a condition prohibiting a change to Class A2 use.

Proposals for non-retail uses involving the redevelopment of premises already containing such uses will normally be acceptable, but any increase in non-retail frontage resulting from redevelopment will be considered against the above criteria and considerations.

#### [Secondary Shopping Frontages \(as defined on the Proposals Map\)](#)

Subject to the provisions of Policy S9 there will generally be no discrimination between shops and non-retail uses falling within Classes A2 or A3 of the Use Classes Order, except where this would be likely to isolate other shops from the bulk of the shopping frontage or



from the main pedestrian flows, would adversely affect residential amenities by way of noise, disturbance or the emission of smells and fumes, or in cases of small local parades or individual units performing an essential retail function for the local community. Other uses will be considered on their individual merits.

### Other Shopping Frontages

In the case of isolated shopping frontages not identified on the Proposals Map, proposals involving the loss of retail uses will be considered on their individual merits. Where the existing use is providing for the shopping needs of the local community its loss will not normally be permitted.

### General (All Categories)

- (i) All uses permitted will be required to retain a shop front with a shop window containing a display or otherwise treated to the satisfaction of the Borough Council.
- (ii) Conditions may also be imposed prohibiting a change to a particular use or uses within the same Use Class or permitted by the General Development Order 1988 where this is considered necessary to prevent serious adverse effects on the environment or on amenity.
- (iii) Permissions for development falling within Class A3 of the Use Classes Order 1987 will also be subject to a condition requiring the installation of extraction equipment to the satisfaction of the Borough Council. Such uses are regarded as being appropriate only within established shopping areas, and applications for such uses elsewhere will normally be refused in order to safeguard residential amenities.
- (iv) Amusement centres and arcades will not normally be permitted in any shopping area and will be required to locate within the Central Seafront Area.
- \* Class A2 and A3 uses, together with the term 'street block' are defined in Appendix 9.

Note: With regard to Class A2 and A3 uses, in assessing whether a proposed use meets the definition in the policy, the Borough Council will have regard to the degree of 'walk in' service provided to visiting members of the public and the contribution made by the elevational treatment to the character of the shopping centre and the continuity of shopping frontage. Only those uses providing a substantial element of direct service to the general public justifying a shopping street location will be permitted. Uses such as accountants' and solicitors' offices will not normally be regarded as acceptable.

## Appendix B – Southend Central Area Action Plan Policy DS1 point 3

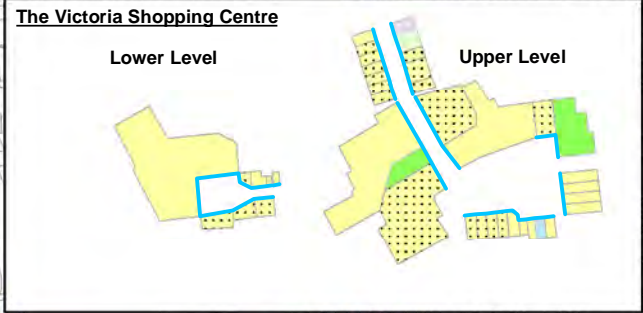
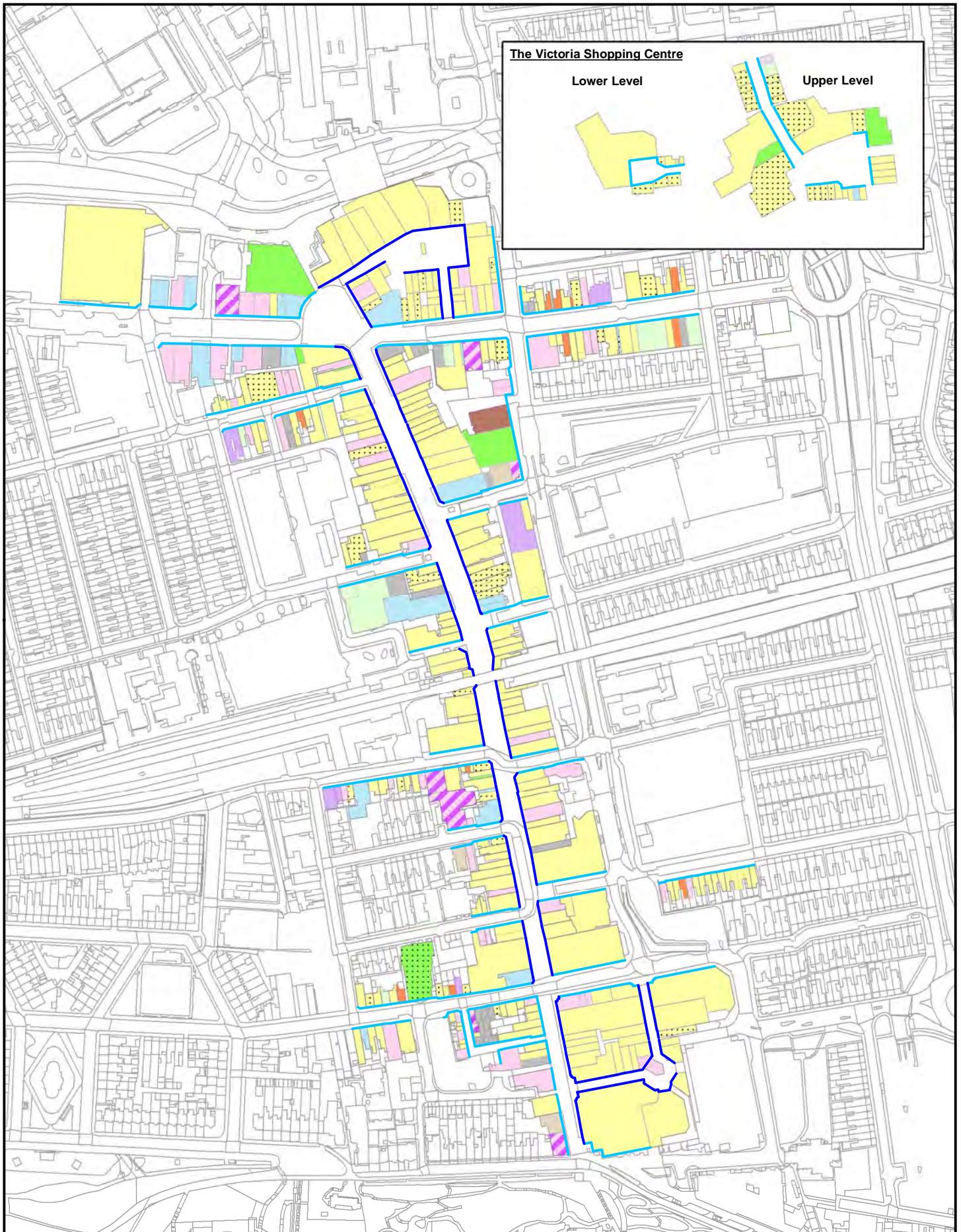
### Policy DS1: A Prosperous Retail Centre

3. The Council will seek to maintain a high level of retail use with at least 60% Class A1 retail use within town centre primary shopping frontage. Alternative appropriate non-retail uses, particularly Class A3 restaurants and café uses, will also be supported provided that they contribute to the vitality of the Town Centre and would result in:

- a. no more than 40% of the town centre primary shopping frontage, measured in terms of length of frontage\*, being used for non-retail purposes. Where non-retail uses would exceed 40% of the primary shopping frontage length, no further loss of Class A1 will be allowed\*\*;
- b. an active frontage is retained or provided with a display function for goods and services rendered and the proposed use will provide a direct service to visiting members of the general public;
- c. no detrimental impact to those living or working nearby, for example by causing undue noise, odour and disturbance.

*\* The measurement will be applied separately to each distinct Town Centre Primary Shopping Frontage zone, these being the High Street (944m), Victoria Shopping Centre (367m) and Royals Shopping Centre (405m)*

*\*\* exceptions to this will be considered if it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the A1 use is no longer viable through an effective 2 year marketing exercise where the vacant property has been offered for sale or letting on the open market at a realistic price and no reasonable offers have been refused. Appendix 8 sets out further information to be provided in relation to marketing of vacant floorspace.*



**Key**

- Primary Shopping Frontage
- Secondary Shopping Frontage
- A1
- A2
- A3
- A3/A4
- A4
- A5
- B1
- C1
- D1
- D2
- SUI GENERIS
- Vacant



## Appendix D – Retail Survey Southend-on-Sea Town Centre (July 2016)

	a. Town Centre Primary Frontage (b+c+d)	b. High Street Primary Frontage	c. Victoria Shopping Centre Primary Frontage	d. The Royals Shopping Centre Primary Frontage	e. Town Centre Secondary Frontage	f. Town Centre Primary + Secondary (a+e)
<b>Class</b>						
<b>A1</b>	86.8%	81.2%	91.2%	95.8%	55.8%	66.8%
<b>A2</b>	5.2%	8.2%	3.2%	0.0%	8.2%	7.1%
<b>A3</b>	6.5%	7.9%	5.5%	4.2%	15.3%	12.2%
<b>A3/A4</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	2.7%
<b>A4</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	1.3%
<b>A5</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%	1.2%
<b>B1</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	0.9%
<b>C1</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%
<b>D1</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	2.2%
<b>D2</b>	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	1.5%
<b>Under Construction</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Sui Generis</b>	1.3%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	5.1%	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Of Which Vacant</b>	5.3%	7.2%	4.6%	1.4%	12.7%	10.1%

