

**Test Valley Revised Local Plan
DPD
2011 – 2029
Regulation 22 – Submission to
Secretary of State**

**Policy LE12: Ground Floor Uses in
Romsey**

**Policy LE13: Ground Floor Uses in
Andover**

Topic Paper

June 2014

REVISED LOCAL PLAN

POLICY LE12-GROUND FLOOR USES IN ROMSEY POLICY LE13- GROUND FLOOR USES IN ANDOVER - TOPIC PAPER

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide background justification to the inclusion of policy LE12 “ground floor uses in Romsey” and policy LE13 “ground floor uses in Andover” within the Test Valley Revised Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Revised Local Plan has continued from the Borough Local Plan (2006) in defining the Town Centres within the Borough. It has identified Romsey and Andover as the Town Centres. Within these two defined centres, primary and secondary frontages have been defined.
- 1.3 In line with the guidance set out in the NPPF, the town centre boundaries of Andover and Romsey that were originally defined in the Borough Local Plan have been revised in order to be more reflective of current circumstances.
- 1.4 Whilst recognising that the composition of town centres is changing due to a number of factors, the Revised Local Plan will continue to seek to maintain a high proportion of class A1 use within the primary shopping area. Within Romsey a threshold of non class A1 use has been set at 35%. Within Andover the threshold of non class A1 use has been set at 30%. These two figures have been informed by the current composition of retail and non retail uses.

2 Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the framework in which planning authorities can establish the role of planning policies in ensuring the vitality of town centres.
- 2.2 The following paragraphs make reference to how Local Plans should be developed in line with a “Town centre first” approach:

Paragraph 23 (ensuring the vitality of Town Centres)

In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should

- *Recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support viability and vitality*

- *Define a network and hierarchy and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes*
- *Define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations*
- *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.*

Paragraph 161 (plan making)

Local planning authorities should use this evidence base to assess

- *The role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of centres*
- *The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development*

The NPPF provides the following definitions :

- *Primary shopping areas: “defined 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)”*
- *Primary and secondary frontages: “primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants cinemas and businesses”.*
- *Town centre: “Area defined on the local authority’s proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres”.*

National Planning Practice Guidance

2.3 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2014) provides the following guidance for design and landscapes:

Local planning authorities should plan positively, to support town centres to generate local employment, promote beneficial competition within and between town centres, and create attractive, diverse places where people want to live, visit and work.

Local planning authorities should adopt a 'town centre first' approach and take account of specific town centre policy. In doing so, local planning authorities need to be mindful of the different rates of development in town centres compared with out of centre.

Local Plans should articulate a positive strategy for town centres which will enable sustainable economic growth and provide a wide range of social and environmental benefits

Once adopted a Local Plan, including any town centre policy that it contains, will be the starting point for any decisions on individual developments. Any strategy should be based on evidence of the current state of town centres and opportunities to meet development needs and support their viability and vitality .

Strategies should identify changes in the hierarchy of town centres, including where a town centre is in decline. In these cases, strategies should seek to manage decline positively to encourage economic activity and achieve an appropriate mix of uses commensurate with a realistic future for that town centre.

2.4 The following indicators, and their changes over time, are relevant in assessing the health of town centres:

- Diversity of uses
- Proportion of vacant street level property
- Commercial yields on non-domestic property
- Customers' views and behaviour
- Retailer representation and intentions to change representation
- Commercial rents
- Pedestrian flows
- Accessibility
- Perception of safety and occurrence of crime
- State of town centre environmental quality

3 Current approach of the Borough Local Plan

3.1 The current approach to town centre development is to maintain a high concentration of class A1 units at ground floor level. The focus on ground floor level is driven by the active frontages at street level. There are five primary shopping areas within Romsey Town Centre; each area has its own maximum threshold for non A1 use (Table 1). There are also five zones within

Andover and each of these zones has an individual maximum threshold for non A1 use.(Table 2)

3.2 Development of non A1 use will also not be permitted if the use would result in a concentration of three or more shops in non retail use.

Table 1- Zones within the primary shopping area of Romsey

Zone no.	Zone Name	% Non A1 use threshold
1	Bell Street	25
2	Church Street	35
3	Latimer Street	35
4	Market Place	55
5	The Hundred	25

Table 2- Zones within the primary shopping area of Andover

Zone no.	Zone Name	% Non A1 use threshold
1	Bridge Street West	40
2	Chantry Centre	15
3	Lower High Street	50
4	Union Street	30
5	Upper High Street	15

4 Revised Local Plan approach

- 4.1 The Council has revised the current Borough Local Plan approach. The town centre has continued to be defined, whilst a new primary shopping area has been created, within this primary and secondary frontages identified. The five primary shopping areas have become one area of primary frontage with the secondary shopping areas becoming secondary frontages.
- 4.2 The pedestrian thoroughfare referred to within the policy wording has also been defined as shown in map 2 & map 4.
- 4.3 The zoned approach that was adopted within the Borough Local Plan has been removed. To continue using a zone approach is inflexible and its original purpose has become less effective in light of changing market drivers. Viewing the previous five zones as one will enable the market to determine where particular uses locate with more freedom.
- 4.4 It is still considered important that a degree of control on the amount of uses within the town centre remains. The Revised Local Plan will continue to seek to retain the predominance of Class A1 use at ground floor. The proportion of non class A1 units will be restricted to 35% within Romsey and 30% in Andover. With regards to the secondary shopping frontages, the policy would remain unchanged.
- 4.5 To ensure that there are active frontages, the Council includes a limit of no more than three non class A1 uses in a row.
- 4.6 Monitoring of frontages within the town centres has been undertaken on a bi-annual basis in May and October for a number of years. The information is reported annually within the Authorities Monitoring Report and has informed the development of these two thresholds. The bi-annual information is also used to guide development management decisions and is available on request.
- 4.7 Comments were made on these two policies during the Regulation 19 consultation. The comments can be viewed in the schedule of officer responses.

5 Current position

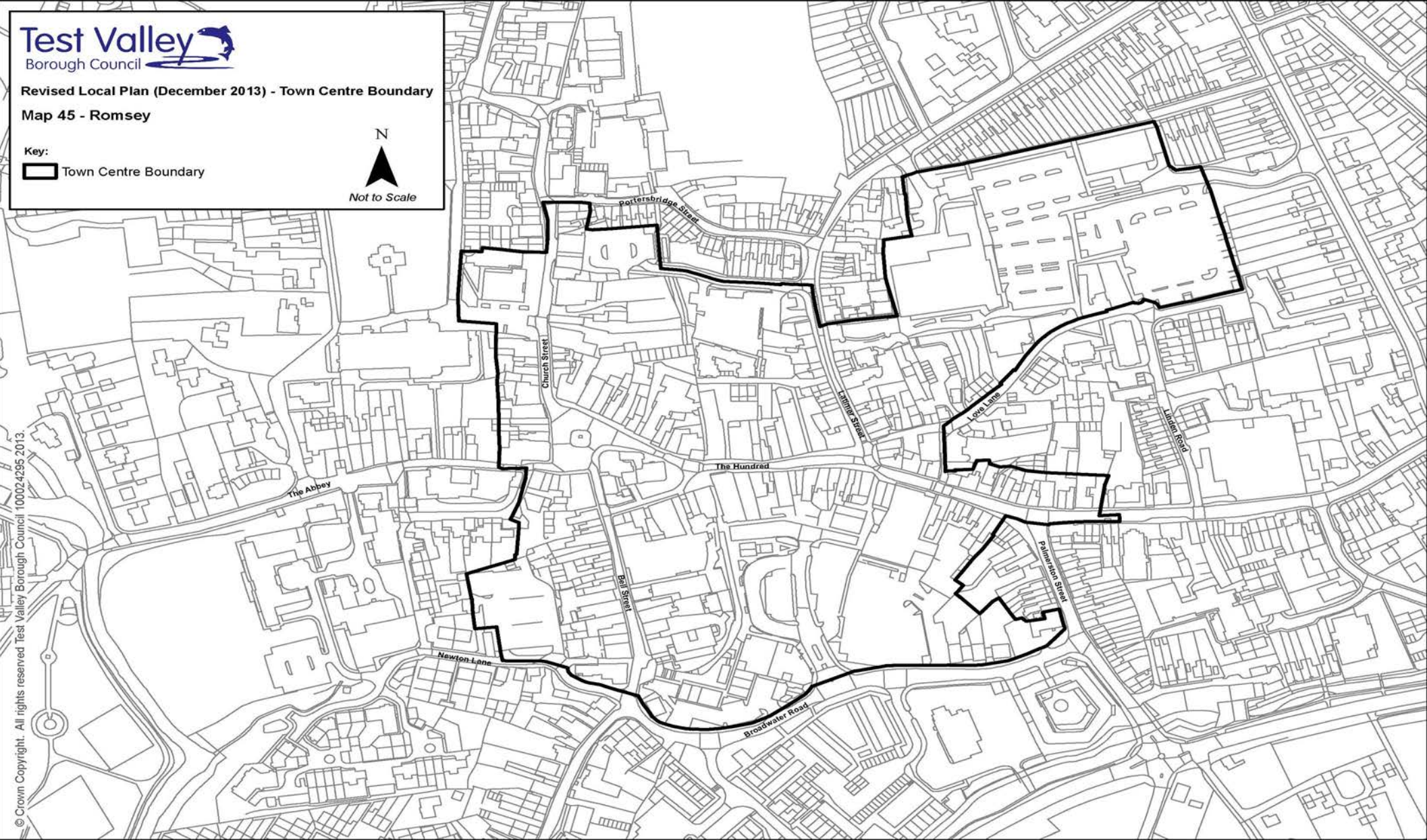
Romsey

- 5.1 Table 3 shows the proportion of use classes within Romsey as at May 2014. Applying criteria a) of LE12, non class A1 use in Romsey would be 32.5%.
- 5.2 Since the town centre was originally defined in the Borough Local Plan, some amendments have been made to the east of the boundary in order to reflect current circumstances and remove units that are no longer in retail use as well as including new units that are now in retail use.
- 5.3 Within Romsey the percentage of vacant units is 2.96%. This is less than the national average. The proposed approach would provide greater opportunities for these units to be filled.
- 5.4 Maps 1 & 2 show the boundaries of Romsey that are proposed to be adopted within the Revised Local Plan.

Table 3- Proportion of class A units in Romsey (May 2014)

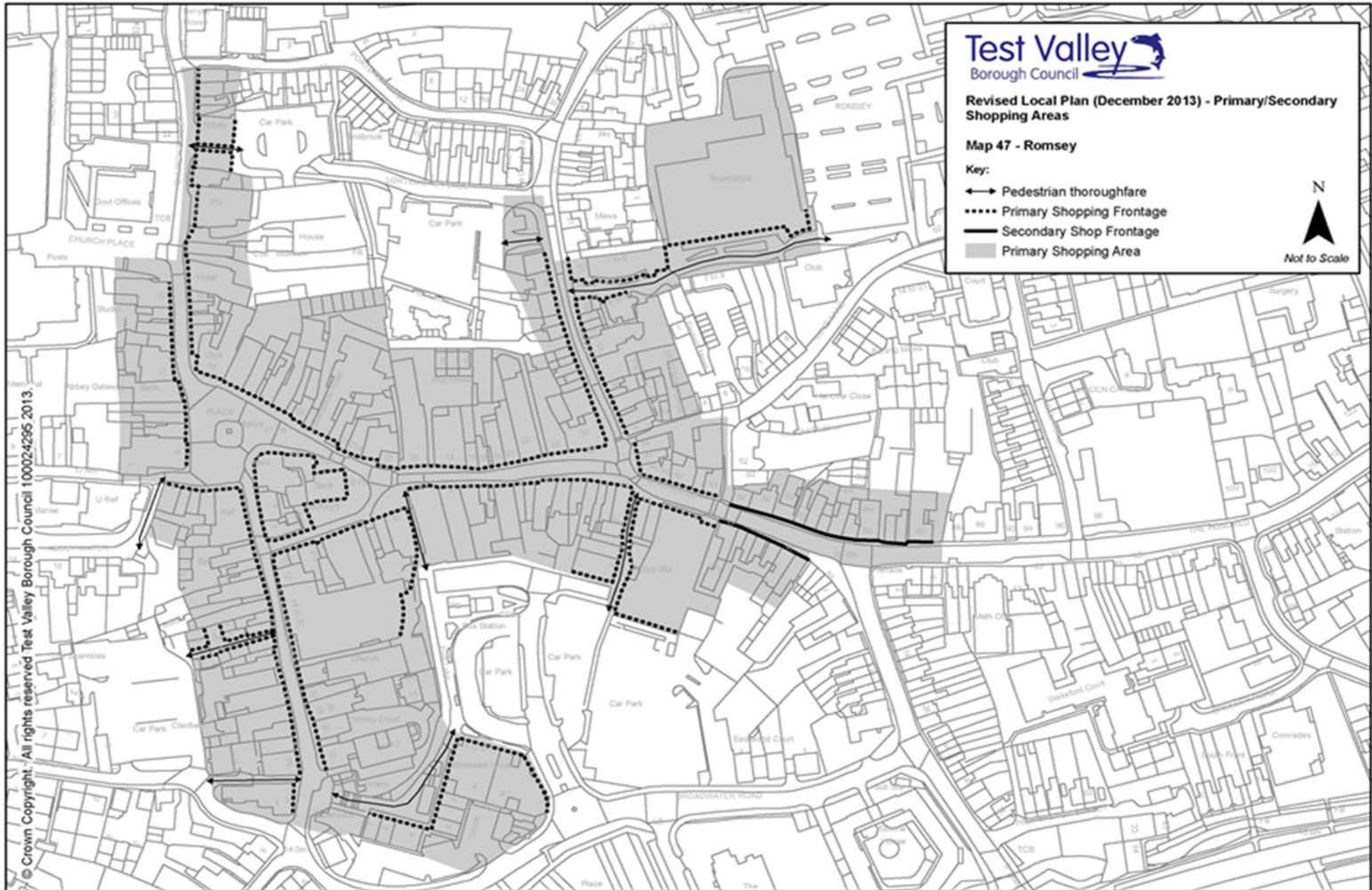
Use	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	OTHER	
Number	114	23	9	4	3	16	
<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS</u>							
169							
<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS</u>							
5							
<u>TOTAL % OF VACANT UNITS</u>							
2.96							

Map 1- Romsey Town Centre Boundary



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Map 3- Romsey Primary and Secondary shopping frontages



5.5 For Table 4 shows the proportion of use classes within Andover. Applying criteria a) of LE13, non class A1 use in Andover would be 26.7%.

5.6 Since the town centre was originally defined in the Borough Local Plan, some minor amendments have been required in order to reflect current circumstances and remove land that is no longer in retail use.

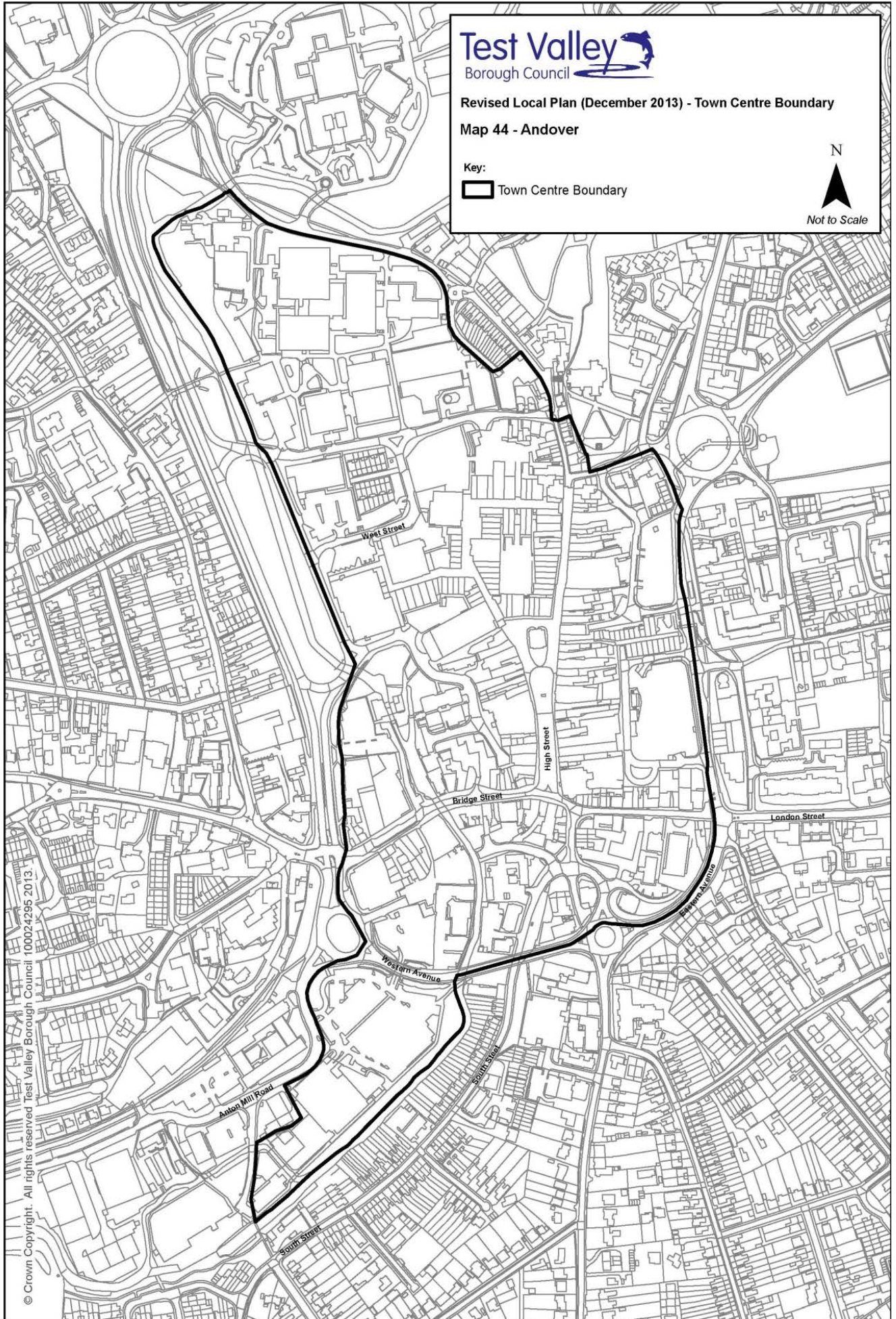
5.7 Within Andover, the percentage of vacant units is 11.52%. This is higher than the national average. The proposed approach would provide greater opportunities for these units to be filled.

5.8 Maps 3 and 4 shows the town centre boundaries for Andover.

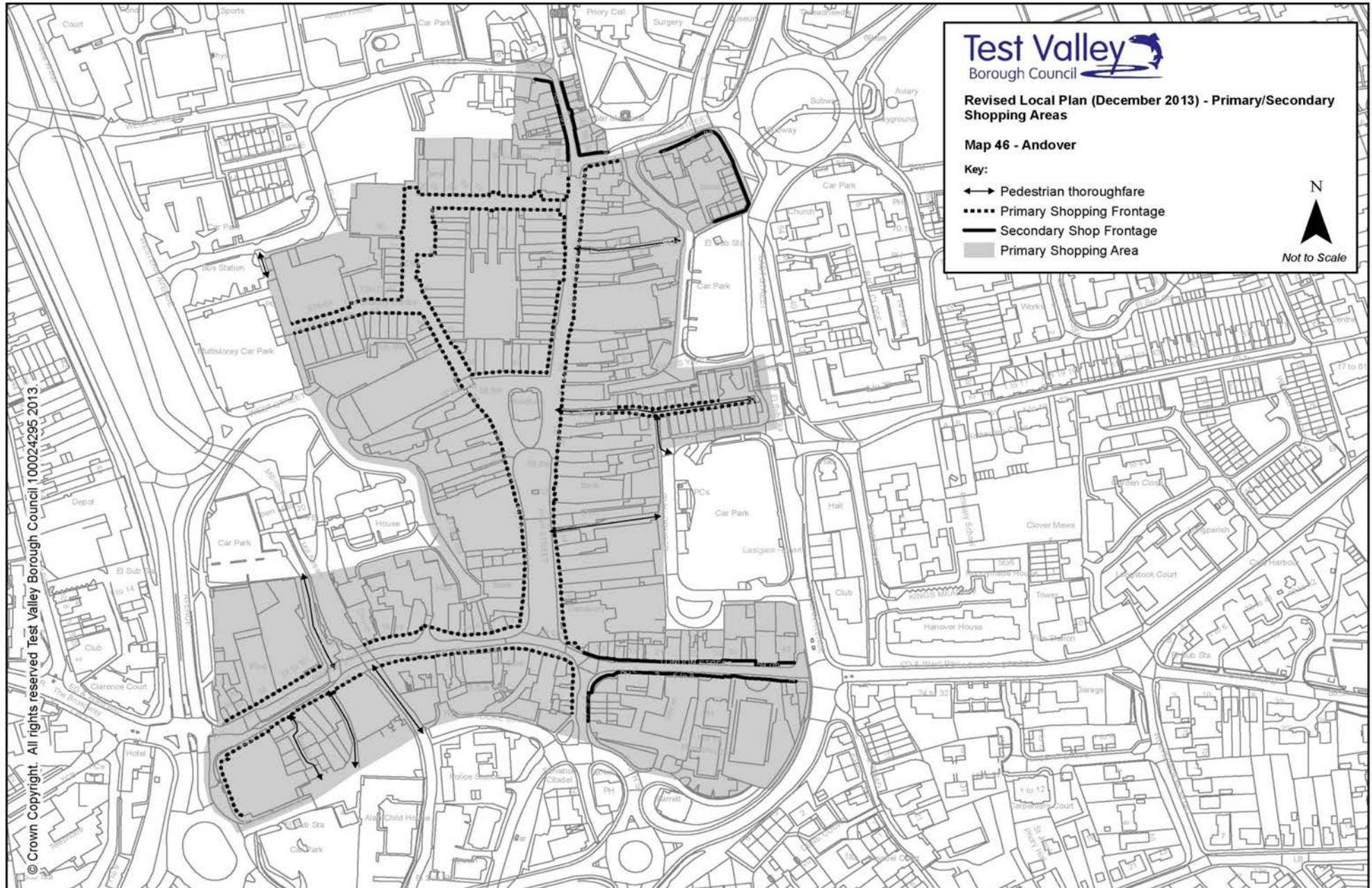
Table 4- proportion of class A units in Andover (May 2014)

Use	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	OTHER	
Number	140	18	16	5	5	7	
<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS</u>							
191							
<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF VACANT UNITS</u>							
22							
<u>TOTAL % OF VACANT UNITS</u>							
11.52							

Map 3- Andover Town Centre Boundary



Map 4- Andover Primary and Secondary shopping frontages



6 Revised Local Plan

6.1 The proposed wording of policy E1 & E2 and supporting text is written below.

Retail

Romsey

6.58 Romsey town centre serves both its residents and those of its immediate rural catchment as a shopping, service and business destination. Romsey is set apart from other immediate town centres with its historic character providing a high quality setting for a mix of activities. The mix of town centre uses has a positive effect on its viability and vitality. The Council wants to encourage its continued prosperity and provide a focus for community activity. However, this needs to be balanced against conserving the character of the

historic centre of Romsey, particularly where new development is proposed both in terms of types of use and the more detailed aspects such as shop front design.

6.59 The Council is developing Romsey Future, a project aimed at creating a strategic vision for the town, ensuring its future as a vibrant, thriving market town. As part of this project, both Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council are considering ways in which the centre of Romsey could be enhanced to provide a more attractive environment to visitors and shoppers, and to encourage them to come to the town. The policies within the Revised Local Plan have been written to help achieve that vision.

6.60 The Council has identified both the primary and secondary shopping frontages within the primary shopping area and seeks to retain these units for shops (Class A1 use), financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurants and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishments (Class A4 use), and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use).

6.61 In the primary shopping area, it is desirable to maintain a high proportion of retail (Class A1 use) and restrict other uses. An over concentration of non A1 uses may lead to less active frontages and make areas less attractive to shoppers thus causing an impact on the existing retail units.

Policy LE12: Ground Floor Uses in Romsey (see Map 46)

Only shops (Class A1 use), financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurants and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishments (Class A4 use), and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use) will be permitted within the ground floor units within the primary and secondary shopping frontages fronting a street or pedestrian thoroughfare.

Within the primary shopping frontages of Romsey, the use of ground floor units fronting a street or pedestrian thoroughfare for financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurant and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishment

(Class A4 use) and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use) will be permitted provided that:

- a) the proposed use would not result in the number of units in non shop (non-Class A1) use exceeding the proportion of 35%; or**
- b) the proposed use would not result in a concentration of more than three consecutive units in non shop (non-Class A1) use.**

Future Retail Opportunities

6.62 Within Romsey town centre, there are limited opportunities for additional large scale retail development, which would need to have regard to its historic environment. However, the Council will consider favourably proposals for additional retail development, including extensions, in the town centre. Taking account of constraints, the southern side of the town centre may provide potential.

6.63 Retail studies commissioned by the Council have re-affirmed previous studies⁷³ that a significant amount of both convenience and comparison expenditure goes to other centres such as Chandler's Ford, Totton and Southampton. Any proposals for additional floorspace in Romsey, outside of the town centre, exceeding 280sqm will require a Sequential Assessment, and exceeding 1,000sqm additionally an Impact Assessment.

Andover

6.64 Andover town centre serves the town and a large rural catchment with an estimated population of 70,000. Within the South East Plan it was identified as a secondary regional centre suitable for major retail development and uses which attract a large number of people. The Council wants to retain and enhance the role of the town centre as a shopping destination. It considers that its future expansion should be supported together with maintaining a range of uses to encourage people to use the town centre.

6.65 To help achieve this the Council along with other interested parties including local retailers and business leaders have established the Andover Summit with the aim of pooling ideas and agreeing a set of priority actions for the town. Agreement was reached on a six point plan to rejuvenate the town centre which includes reviewing planning controls, environmental benefits, signage, parking, town centre management and high street events.

The policies within the Revised Local Plan have been written to help support those priorities where planning plays a key role.

6.66 The Council has identified both the primary and secondary shopping frontages within the primary shopping area and seeks to retain these units for shops (Class A1 use), financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurants and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishments (Class A4 use), and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use).

6.67 In the primary shopping area, it is desirable to maintain a high proportion of

retail (Class A1 use) and restrict other uses. An over concentration of non A1 uses may lead to less active frontages and make areas less attractive to shoppers thus causing an impact on the existing retail units.

Policy LE13: Ground Floor Uses in Andover (see Map 47)

Only shops (Class A1 use), financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurants and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishments (Class A4 use), and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use) will be permitted within the ground floor units within the primary and secondary shopping frontages fronting a street or pedestrian thoroughfare.

Within the primary shopping frontages of Andover, the use of ground floor units fronting a street or pedestrian thoroughfare for financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurant and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishment (Class A4 use) and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use) will be permitted provided that:

- a) the proposed use would not result in the number of units in non shop (non-Class A1) use exceeding the proportion of 30%: or**
- b) the proposed use would not result in a concentration of more than three consecutive units in non shop (non-Class A1) use.**

6.68 A mix of town centre uses has a positive effect on its viability and vitality and the Council wants to encourage its prosperity and provide a focus for community activity. However, these need to be balanced against preserving the character of the centre of Andover both in terms of types of use and the more detailed aspects such as shop front design.

6.69 The Council has identified both the primary and secondary frontages and seeks to retain these units for shops (Class A1 use), financial and professional services (Class A2 use), restaurants and cafes (Class A3 use), drinking establishments (Class A4 use), and hot food takeaways (Class A5 use).

6.70 In the primary shopping area, it is desirable to maintain a high proportion of retail (Class A1) use and restrict other uses. Over concentration of non A1 uses may lead to less active frontages and make areas less attractive to shoppers thus causing an impact on the existing retail units.

7 Summary

7.1 The inclusion of policies LE12 and LE13 within the Revised Local Plan is considered justified given the emphasis placed on Local Planning Authorities to ensure vitality of Town Centres. The ability of the Council to monitor the changes that have occurred in Romsey and Andover Town Centres has enabled a policy to be developed that is flexible and reflective of the nature of the town centres. It is considered that the approach taken in the Revised Local Plan is in line with current national policy, whilst providing the appropriate balance between flexibility as the use and function of town centres change and

the appropriate fettering of the market through restrictions on uses to maintain both vitality and viability and meet community needs.