

Local Development Order: Draft Statement of Reasons

Objective of the Local Development Order

The principle aim of the order is to support the vitality and viability of the day time uses within North Harrow District Shopping Centre by enabling the flexible occupancy of existing and vacant premises in parts of the town centre.

1.1 The Local Development Order would extend permitted development rights for changes of use of ground floor premises that will contribute to vitality and vibrancy of the day time uses as set out in the Council's Unitary Development Plan Policies for shopping EM16 Change of Use of Shops –Primary Shopping Frontages and EM 17 Changes of Use of Shops – Secondary Shopping Frontages and the London Plan policies for district shopping. With the appropriate shopping policies in mind, only the following uses would be considered acceptable;

1.2

- A1: Shops
- A2: Financial and professional services
- A3: Restaurants and cafes
- B1 (a) as an office other than a use within A2 (financial and professional services)
- D1: Non-residential institutions specifically health centres, day nurseries public halls and non-residential education and training centres (subject to a maximum of 150 square metres)

1.3 It is envisaged that the LDO would become a mechanism for both increasing occupancy levels and also for improving the appearance of the area.

Reasons/ Principles used to prepare the contents of the draft order

The principle reason behind the preparation of the draft order is to tackle parts of the District Centre where the vacancy rates are impacting on the vitality of the centre.

Notwithstanding the provisions of shopping policies EM16 and EM17 of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan the uses identified in the order, subject to limitation are considered to support the objectives of enhancing the daytime activity and footfall in the centre and creating an economically diverse, and active business environment to support the needs of the surrounding community.

Careful consideration has been given to the location of the shopping parades included in the draft local development order. The local development order will be confined to the areas identified in the map as shown in (Appendix C)

The limitations of the order:

1. The hours of operations for uses set out in the Local Development Order will be restricted to between 08.00 and 22.00hrs. Any operations beyond 22.00 hrs will require planning permission.
2. The LDO does not remove the requirement for planning permission for the installation of new shopfronts and any other physical alterations
3. The LDO does not remove the requirement for advertisement consent where appropriate.
4. The LDO does not remove the requirement for consents obtained under other legislation, such as licensing regulations.
5. The LDO would be confined to the parts of North Harrow District Shopping Centre as identified on the map set out in (Appendix C)
6. Should you require confirmation that the proposed use falls within use classes permitted by the LDO it is recommended that a certificate of lawfulness be applied for from the Council.
7. The LDO would apply to the premises within the area edged blue on the attached map in (Appendix C)

Justification for the creation of a LDO

- 1.4 Following the closure of the Safeway supermarket in North Harrow in 2003, the centre has been affected by a significant decrease in footfall, as a result of which businesses have closed and North Harrow as a shopping centre has declined.
- 1.5 North Harrow is one of nine district shopping centres in the Borough of Harrow. The Council has, in recent months, undertaken extensive work to build up a partnership for the District Centre and to initiate actions to revitalise the area, including exploring the possibility of a LDO.
- 1.6 The creation of a LDO aims to assist greater flexibility by paving the way for a wide range of appropriate uses without the need for planning permission, Harrow Council hopes this will encourage businesses to locate in this area in the knowledge that the process and risks for obtaining consent will be removed, thereby cutting costs.
- 1.7 The ultimate objective of the LDO is to assist in reducing the proportion of empty shop frontages in North Harrow District Centre. Harrow Council will work with other stake holders, such as the Town Centre Partnership to help with other initiatives designed to help achieve this objective including;
 - Promotion and Marketing
 - Business Support
 - Parking
 - Improving Public Realm

Statement of Policies that the LDO would implement

- 2.0 The LDO would implement Policy draft delivery as set in the Council's Core Strategy for Rayners Lane and North Harrow CS5
- 2.1 The objectives of the LDO complement the Unitary Development Plan Policy EM16 Change of Use of Shops _ Primary and EM 17 Change of Use in Secondary frontages by ensuring any permitted uses support and are appropriate to the function of the town centre.
- 2.2 The objectives of the LDO complements the key aims of the London Plan policies for district shopping centres.
- 2.3 The LDO would accord with the requirements of Government Planning Policy Statement (PPS4) Planning for sustainable growth as well as Planning Policy (PPS 12) Local Spatial Planning

Lifetime of the LDO

- 2.4 It is intended that the LDO is active for a period of three years following the date of its adoption. This is to help business and operators during the current uncertain economic climate. Following the end of this three year period, the LDO would cease to apply. The Council would then have the following options:
 - Renew the LDO under same terms/conditions as previously;
 - Renew the LDO but modify its terms and conditions; or
 - Delete the LDO and return the area to its designation as Primary and Secondary Frontage within a District Shopping Centre or other policy designation
- 2.5 The uses that have taken place during the lifetime of the LDO will be allowed to continue to trade/operate but no new changes of use will be allowed under the terms of the LDO following its expiry without planning permission.

Monitoring the LDO

- 2.6 It is intended that the LDO will be subject to continuous monitoring to assess its effectiveness. This will be carried out via quarterly vacancy surveys to assess how far it is helping to fill empty shop units in the area.
- 2.7 It will also be the subject of a section in the Annual Monitoring Report, which will discuss further the impact of the LDO on the area and the quality of the public realm.