

Identification of Retail Frontages & Local and Neighbourhood Centres

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper sets out Stafford Borough Council's development of a policy approach to maintaining and enhancing the functions of town, local and neighbourhood centres of Stafford Borough. The proposals in the paper build upon policy E8 of the Plan for Stafford Borough, by considering the need for retail frontage policies in the Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2 and explaining how local and neighbourhood centres were identified.

2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.1. Section 2 of the NPPF sets out policies for 'ensuring the vitality of town centres', to support their role and function as the heart of the local community, and promote their continued vitality and viability.

2.2. NPPF paragraph 23 encourages local planning authorities to set out planning policies that are positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.

2.3. In drawing up Local Plans, Local Planning Authorities should **'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.'**

2.4. The NPPF defines a *Primary Shopping Area* as an area where retail development is concentrated, a core area, generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage. *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.

2.5. In line with the NPPF, frontage designations are the most important mechanism for ensuring that retail uses, particularly A1 Use Class, are maintained allowing maximum opportunity for development of specified areas within Town Centres.

3. Local Context

The Plan for Stafford Borough

3.1. Policy E8 of the Plan for Stafford Borough specifies a hierarchy of centres. These are set out below:

- Stafford Town Centre
- Stone Town Centre
- Eccleshall Local Centre
- Village and Neighbourhood shops – Barlaston, Gnosall, Great and Little Haywood, Hixon, Tittensor, Weston, Woodseaves, Yarnfield, Stafford Neighbourhood Centres at Baswich, Holmcroft, Parkside, Rising Brook, Wildwood and Weston Road, and Stone Local Centre at Walton.

3.2. The main shopping areas in the Borough are the centres of Stafford and Stone. Stafford remains a strong sub regional centre, while Stone functions as a service centre for the

north of the Borough. Both deliver typical town centre retail provision as well as other uses such as restaurants, bars and pubs, offices and services.

- 3.3. Eccleshall is a key local centre servicing a large part of the rural area. Below this there are a range of smaller village and neighbourhood shops. These are distinctly local in nature and service the individual village or hamlet.
- 3.4. An assessment of Stafford and Stone Town Centre Retail Capacity was prepared by consultants in 2010¹. This study evaluated the main town centre use(s) 'capacity' for the two towns. It outlined the primary and secondary frontages and the primary shopping area for Stafford town centre (Appendix 10), and similarly for Stone town centre (Appendix 11). The study formed part of the evidence base which informed the Plan for Stafford Borough.
- 3.5. A subsequent review of the assessment in 2013: Stafford and Stone Town Centre Retail Capacity Update² considered new developments including the Sainsbury's store in Stafford and a Morrison's store in Stone. While the updated report recognised the importance of these retail stores and how they could add vitality to each of the locations, the consultants did not consider either site adjoined the primary and secondary frontage area, or was adjacent to the established primary shopping areas. Therefore these new developments were regarded as edge of centre and subsequently excluded from the primary shopping areas.
- 3.6. As the primary shopping areas for both Stafford and Stone town centres were defined in the 2010 report and consequently adopted by SBC in the Plan for Stafford Borough in June 2014, it was unnecessary to review these boundaries.
- 3.7. This paper considers if there have been any changes to the primary and secondary frontages for Stafford and Stone and whether separate frontage policies are needed for these areas. The paper also identifies the local and village centres for Eccleshall and the smaller retail areas.

4. Methodology

4.1. Existing evidence

- Stafford and Stone Town Centre Retail Capacity Study Update May 2014
- Stafford and Stone Town Centre Retail Capacity Assessment 2010
- Stafford Borough Local Plan (2001) Superseded Town Centre boundaries

4.2. The existing evidence was reviewed and used as the main point of reference for the ground surveys carried out to support the Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2.

Defining Primary and Secondary Retail frontages for Stafford and Stone Town Centre

4.3. In spring 2015, Stafford Borough Council carried out surveys in Stafford and Stone to establish the current uses of ground floor units within the primary shopping areas. Working from maps of the identified primary shopping areas for Stafford and Stone³ each centre was visited to collect evidence and establish Planning Use Classes. Regard was had to the 2010 primary and secondary frontages map from the 2010 study. The 2010 study assessed shop parades/units as either primary frontages (predominantly A1 retail use) or

¹ <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/live/Documents/Forward%20Planning/Examination%20Library%202013/D16--STAFFORD-AND-STONE-TOWN-CENTRE-CAPACITY-ASSESSMENT-FINAL-REPORT-2011.pdf>

² <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/live/Documents/Forward%20Planning/Examination%20Library%202013/D15--STAFFORD-AND-STONE-TOWN-CENTRE-RETAIL-CAPACITY-UPDATE-FINAL-REPORT-2013.pdf>

³ The Stafford area inset map 1 and Stone area inset map 2 from the adopted Plan for Stafford Borough.

secondary frontages with a diversity of uses. The spring 2015 site visits were particularly designed to identify any changes in the frontages since the 2010 study was carried out.

4.4. The information collected during the site surveys included addresses, shop/unit names, their current uses and the identified Planning Use Classes. The results of the site visits were subsequently entered onto a database. Photographic evidence was taken of each unit to support the ground research and to aid assessment of the information collected.

4.5. Proposed amendments

4.6. Having analysed the database and assessed the photographic evidence collected on the ground some areas / streets were subsequently identified for revision, and suggestions made for changes to the existing frontage designations.

4.7. In defining primary and secondary frontages for Stafford and Stone, Stafford Borough Council have used the same approach used in the original study, and considered other factors. These other factors include footfall but primarily includes the location of units, in that a unit (s) may not necessarily be an A1 retail use but its location is prime in that it naturally forms the continuation of a frontage or functions as a gateway into a main high-street. On that basis, additional units have been included within the boundaries.

Stafford

4.8. For Stafford town centre, all retail provision within the primary shopping area was reviewed. The site visits included assessment of shops at Water Street, North Walls and Bailey Street. These streets were not previously designated as a frontage as they were on the edge of the primary shopping area or contained insufficient units to make a significant impact. An area which has not currently been incorporated into the frontage designation is the forthcoming Riverside shopping centre. This site is currently under construction, it is expected to be completed in mid-2016. When complete this area is likely to form part of the retail frontage within Stafford Town. This will be reviewed when the development has progressed.

4.9. Below is a table indicating the suggested changes to the frontages and the reasons behind them.

Stafford town centre			
<i>Street</i>	<i>Current status</i>	<i>Amend to</i>	<i>Reason for change</i>
Prince's Street, Nos. 20 to 34	Secondary	Primary	The shops on this parade are either A1 or A2 use. The opposite side of the street is currently primary, as are the streets around it.
Salter Street, No. 1	Not rated	Secondary	Salter Street, Nos. 3 to 20, is already designated secondary. Inclusion of No. 1 would be a continuation of the frontage. This is also a pedestrianized area encouraging access between Salter Street and the primary Gaolgate Street. This extends the secondary frontage along Salter Street and onto Gaolgate Street from North Walls following the new development of the Morrison's store.
Salter Street, Nos. 21 to 24	Not rated	Secondary	The shops on this parade are mixed A1 to A3 use. It is off the main high street location and is considered to be a secondary frontage due

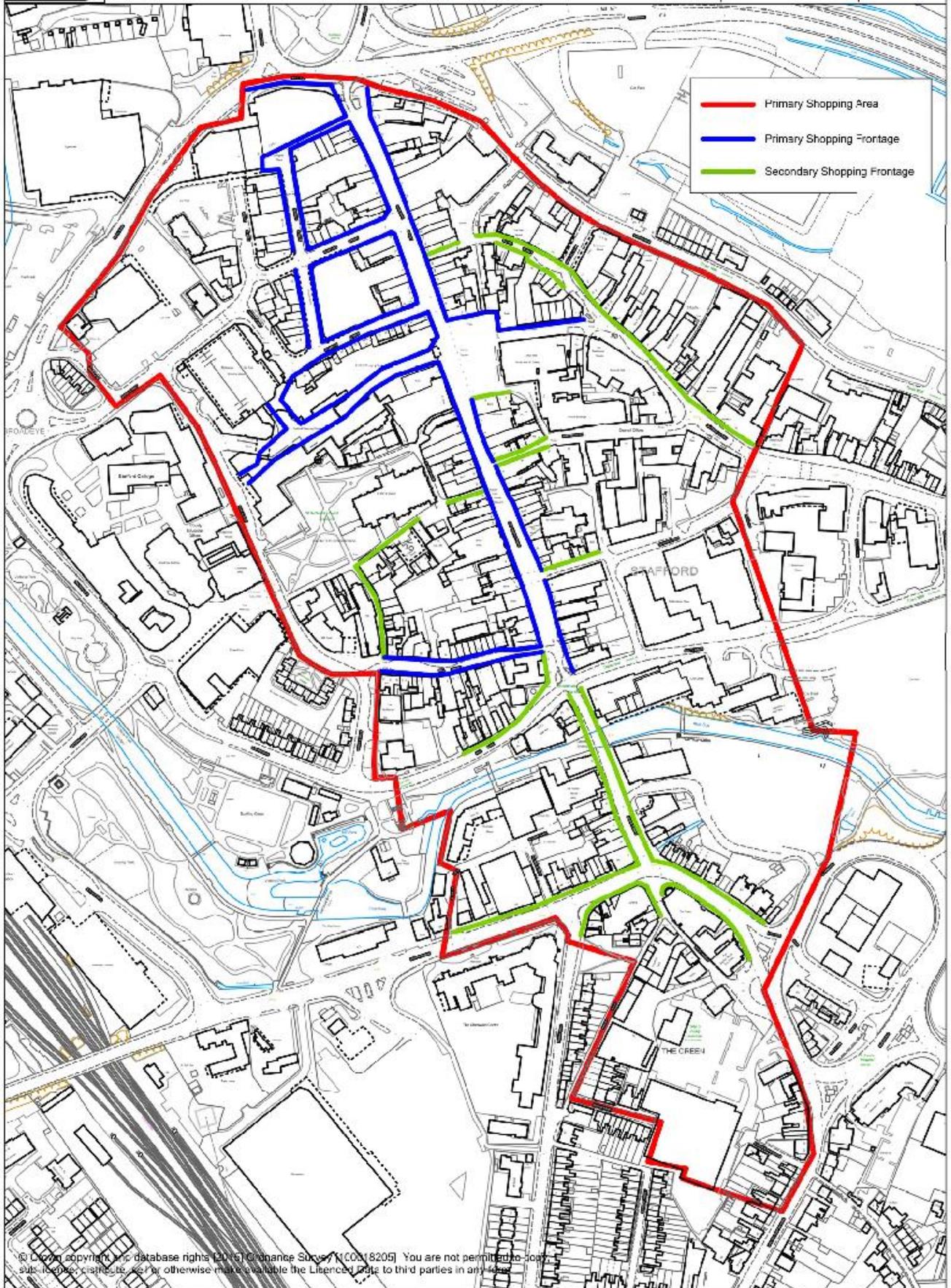
			to its diversity of uses.
Market Square, Nos. 6 to 8	Not rated	Secondary	The rest of Market Square is rated as primary frontage. This is a single shop (A1 use) and the side of a bank (A2), therefore secondary frontage is appropriate. Though many of the uses are mainly A2 uses, (financial services), it is considered to be identified as a secondary frontage due to its prime location which contributes as a key frontage to Market Square and forms a natural continuation of the high street.
St Mary's Mews on St Mary's Place	Not rated	Secondary	This particular street links with Church Lane (secondary frontage) and a side passage (secondary frontage) that leads directly onto Greengate Street (primary). Adding this Mews development of mixed A1-A3 use would strengthen the existing frontage. It is on a well-used pedestrian cut through.
Greengate Street, No. 34 & 35 (currently 'The Post House' restaurant and club)	Not rated	Secondary	This is an A3 use building, which contributes and functions as a key gateway into the main high street (Greengate Street). It is also a Grade II* building; a distinct landmark which naturally fronts onto both Greengate Street (primary frontage) and Mill Bank (secondary). Including this building would naturally continue the secondary frontage on Mill Bank.
Bailey Street, No. 14	Not rated	Secondary	These two areas are related. There is a natural break in the frontage so this will now be reflected in the secondary frontage mark up.
Lichfield Street, The Green	Secondary	Secondary	

4.10. With these proposed amendments included, the primary and secondary retail frontages for Stafford Town Centre now include the following streets, shown in the table below.

Primary Retail Frontages	Secondary Retail Frontages
1-42 Gaolgate Street	2-3 Tipping Street
Unit C Gaolgate Place	1-10 Church Lane
1-34 Princess Street	11-12 St Mary's Gate
2-36 Crabberly Street	1 – 24 Salter Street
1-7 Market Street	Bank House Salter Street (Coffee Shop and Surveyors)
1-8 Market Square	1 – 9 Eastgate Street
1-9a Hunters row	30 -33 Greengate Street
2-58 Greengate Street (excluding 30, 31, 32 and 33)	1-16 Bridge Street
2-41c Guildhall Shopping Centre	133a-149 Newport Road
1-48 Mill Lane	1-4 Newport Road
2-22 Stafford Street	Newport Road: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Stafford Cinema • Rooney's Barber
1-42 Gaolgate Street	Bailey Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No 14 • The Green • Stafford Baptist Church
Unit C Gaolgate Place	2-8b Lichfield Street

1-34 Princess Street	1-5 Martin Street
2-36 Crabberly Street	17- 18 Martin Street
1-7 Market Street	30 – 35 Mill Bank
1-8 Market Square	
1-9a Hunters row	
2-58 Greengate Street (both sides excluding 30, 31, 32 and 33)	
2-41c Guildhall Shopping Centre	
1-48 Mill Lane	
2-22 Stafford Street	

4.11. The revised Primary and Secondary retail frontages for Stafford Town are shown on the map overleaf.



Stone

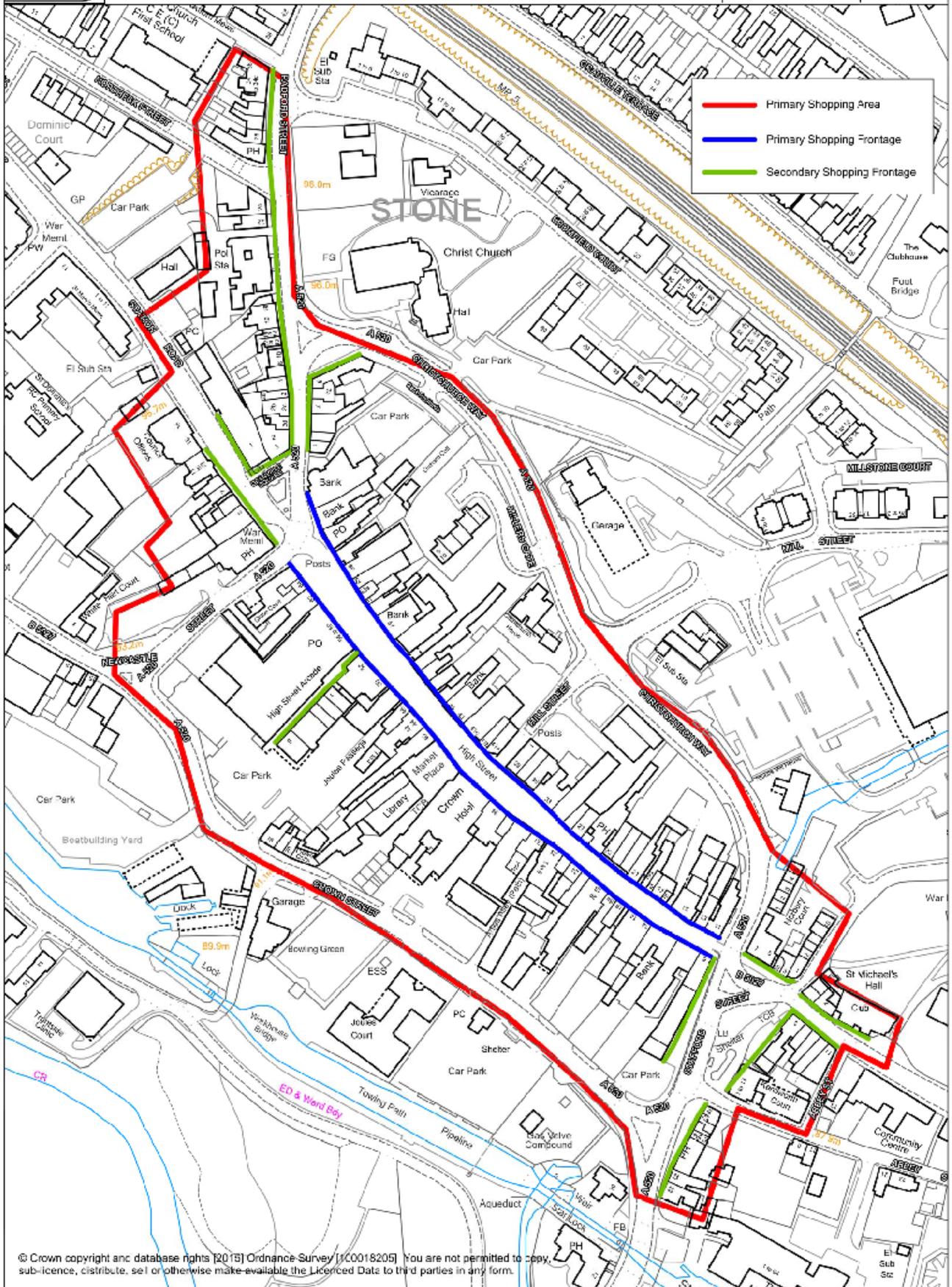
4.12. For Stone town centre, all retail offering within the primary shopping area was reviewed at and recorded. The streets in the table below were not designated under any type of frontage in the 2010 report. Following the ground survey and further analysis the streets below have been identified for revision.

Stone town centre			
Street	Current status	Amend to	Reason for change
High Street Arcade, off the High Street	Not rated	Secondary	7 units. Mix of uses A1, A2 and A3. Well used cut-through to car park at rear of the Co-Operative supermarket. The Co-Op is on the opposite side of the Arcade.
Stafford Street, Nos. 10 to 24	Not rated	Secondary	This parade containing A1 to A4 use is within the Stone primary shopping area and would be a natural continuation of the retail offering at this end of Stone. The top end of Stafford Street is secondary frontage on both sides.

4.13. With these proposed amendments included, the primary and secondary retail frontages for Stone Town Centre now include the following streets, shown in the Table below

Primary Retail Frontages	Secondary Retail Frontages
6-66 High Street	1-2b Granville Square
11-75 High Street	2-36 Radford Street
	1-9 Radford Street
	1-13 Station Road
	1-5 High Street Arcade
	1-7 High Street
	1 Church Street
	2-4 Lichfield Street
	1-13 Stafford Street
	3-11 Lichfield Street
	10-22 Stafford Street
	Stafford Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampson Chambers • Contract House

4.14. The revised Primary and Secondary retail frontages for Stone Town are shown on the map overleaf.



5. Assessing the Need for Primary and Secondary Frontage Policies

- 5.1. Specific retail frontage policies are not explicitly required by the NPPF. National policy requires Local Authorities 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 set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.’***
- 5.2. Stafford Borough Council has identified the extent of the town centres at Stafford and Stone already, as adopted in the Plan for Stafford Borough. Policy E8 makes clear which uses will be acceptable in these locations. The necessity of identifying the specific locations of primary and secondary frontages for these centres primarily rests on whether the Council intends to adopt a policy specifically relating to these frontages (as opposed to the whole of the Primary Shopping Area).
- 5.3. Policy E8 of the Plan for Stafford Borough provides a range of mechanisms by which the Council will manage development in the town centres with the aim of promoting their vitality and viability. Policy E8 controls development by retail area rather than by retail frontage. Para 9.30 states that the primary and secondary frontages for Stafford and Stone will be identified in the Plan for Stafford Borough Part 2.
- 5.4. The Council has reviewed the necessity of adopting retail frontage policies and provides a summary of the advantages and disadvantage of such an approach below.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Supporting the strength of retail offer within the frontages	Potential for missed opportunities as policy restriction may prevent a diverse mix of uses in the frontages
Clear planning policy for developers and the public	Shoppers are used to a mix of uses within the shopping area (e.g. cafes and bars)
No dilution of the retail offer with unnecessary uses	Static policy preserving the existing structure of the town centre – doesn't reflect changing nature of centres
	Online shopping and changes in retailing generally require flexibility in retail planning

6. Eccleshall Local Centre and Village and Neighbourhood Shops

Eccleshall Local Centre

- 6.1. Within the retail hierarchy of centres, Eccleshall is identified as a local centre. In comparison to other village and neighbourhood shops, Eccleshall is a large rural village providing key services and facilities to the local community. To support Policy E8 in the Plan for Stafford Borough, a boundary showing the local centre has been identified.
- 6.2. In spring 2015, a site visit and survey was carried out to collect evidence and establish the current Planning Use Classes. The site visit identified a key area where retail development is concentrated; this primarily includes shops/ units found on Castle Street, Stafford Street, High Street Stone Road and public services found on Stone Road.
- 6.3. Using the information collated from the site visits, a boundary which comprises a primary shopping area within Eccleshall has been defined. The Eccleshall Local Centre boundary includes the following streets:

2-42 High Street
1-43 High Street

2-22 Stafford Street
1-21 Stafford Street

2-12 Castle Street
1-3 Castle Street
1-6 Selwyn Court and

Public Conveniences and the Police Station situated on Stone Road.

- 6.4. The boundary for the Eccleshall Local Centre has been defined based on a high proportion of A1 uses found in the area in comparison to other uses. Within the boundary other planning class uses are identified including; A2 (Financial and Professional services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), A4 (Drinking establishments) and A5 (Hot food takeaways). These uses generally comprise a mix of uses that are typically found in local centres.

Village and Neighbourhood Shops

- 6.5. Village and Neighbourhood shops are areas outside the retail hierarchy of Town and Local centres, however they continue to make an important contribution in serving the immediate locality.
- 6.6. In accordance with Policy E8, the **Village shops in Stafford Borough** can be found in Barlaston, Gnosall, Great and Little Haywood, Hixon, Tittensor, Weston, Woodseaves and Yarnfield. **The Neighbourhood Shops** are found in Baswich, Holmcroft, Parkside, Rising Brook, Wildwood and Weston Road, and Walton (Stone).
- 6.7. To follow a consistent approach, the boundaries have been defined showing Village Shops and Neighbourhood Shops for each of the areas indicated above. These are based on site visits carried out in spring 2015 by Stafford Borough Council to identify the type of uses that currently exist on the ground. In Weston, there are currently no shops that exist therefore no boundary has been defined for this Village.
- 6.8. The table below describes the locations that define the Village and Neighbourhood Shops for each of the villages. The boundaries are shown on the policies inset maps.

Village identified in policy E8 hierarchy	Boundary comprises of:
Barlaston	1-8 Orchard Place Station Road; Plume of Feathers 13-21 Station Road
Gnosall	22-44 High Street 9-23 High Street 104-112 Wharf Road
Hixon	Smithy Lane Post Office Unit 2-3 Smithy Lane
Great Haywood	1 to 5 Trent Road The Clifford Arms – Main Road
Little Haywood	The Corner Shop on Main Road Main Road Red Lion Inn (Pub) Main Road Land and Flag (Pub)
Tittensor	The Post Office on 7 Winghouse Lane
Yarnfield	The Post Office on Greenside
Haughton	Shopping Centre on Newport Road
Weston	No active shops - so no boundary identified
Woodseaves	The Post Office on Newport Road

6.9. The table below describes the locations that define the Village and Neighbourhood Shops for each of the Neighbourhood shops. The boundaries are shown on the policies inset maps.

Neighbourhood Shop Boundary	Boundary comprises of:
Baswich (Stafford)	37-59 Bodmin Avenue The Lynton Tavern
Holmcroft (Stafford)	48-56 Holmcroft Road The Holmcroft
Parkside (Stafford)	1-20 Parkside Shopping Precinct The Staffordshire Bull
Rising Brook (Stafford)	Burton Court 1-12 Burton Square
Wildwood (Stafford)	Wildwood Shopping Centre on Wildwood Drive The Wildwood (pub)
Weston Road (Stafford)	53-65 Weston Road The Metropolitan Bar
Walton (Stone)	36-50 Eccleshall Road

