SOUTH WEST WALES REGIONAL RETAIL STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of Ceredigion County Council, Pembrokeshire County Council, & Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study has been prepared to help inform both plan-making and decision-taking across the three authority areas and assist in the development of planning policy; particularly in relation to future retail provision. Consideration has been given to recently updated national and local development plan policy guidance.

A household survey was commissioned as part of the study which involved a telephone interview of 1,600 households across the defined study area. The survey helped to identify shopping patterns for different types of retail categories. The results were used to identify where retail expenditure is directed to, including key foodstores and town centres in each of the Partner Authority areas.

The assessment of the need (or ‘capacity’) for new retail (convenience and comparison goods) floorspace up to 2036 has been carried out, identifying need at strategic level and for key centres in each authority area. Forecast capacity has been informed by 2014-based population projections derived from the Welsh Government.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the key findings of the study, including the findings of the market share analysis (shopping patterns), health check assessment of the partner authority town centres and assessment of retail need for each authority.

Pembrokeshire County and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

The market share analysis in Section 4 shows almost all of resident catchment convenience expenditure is retained in Pembrokeshire County and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park as a whole. Key foodstores in Haverfordwest account for the majority of retained convenience expenditure. Smaller centres in Pembrokeshire County and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park attract a smaller proportion of convenience expenditure which reflects a more limited offer in convenience provision compared to larger centres. For comparison goods, the catchment for Pembrokeshire County and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park as a whole retains a relatively high proportion of expenditure for all comparison goods (60.1%). Leakage from the catchment is mainly directed to Carmarthenshire. At centre level, Haverfordwest attracts the greatest proportion of expenditure from the catchment, which reflects the centre’s role as a sub-regional town centre. Within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park area, Tenby attracts the greatest proportion of comparison goods expenditure.

A review of Special Forms of Trading (SFT), which includes online shopping sales shows that 4.5% of residents in the Pembrokeshire catchment area purchase convenience goods online. For comparison goods, SFT accounts for almost a quarter of all catchment expenditure. The SFT market share increases for the particular comparison goods such as recording media (e.g. CDs, DVDs, music downloads, etc.), audio visual, and books and stationary.

The market share analysis informed forecast need for new retail floorspace for Pembrokeshire County and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and centres within. At strategic level, the capacity assessment identifies up 1,244 sqm net of new comparison goods retail floorspace in 2031, increasing to 4,973 sqm net by the end of the study period

(2036). The majority of the forecast capacity is directed to Haverfordwest (up to 2,916 sqm net by 2036). No forecast capacity is identified for new convenience floorspace over the study period due to committed retail floorspace, in particular the Sainsbury's scheme in Haverfordwest.

In terms of accommodating growth, the study concluded the following for centres in Pembrokeshire County:

Haverfordwest – there is no capacity for new comparison goods (including bulky goods floorspace) in the short to medium term (up to 2026). However, in the longer term to 2036, capacity emerges for up to 4,059 sqm net of new comparison goods, which accounts for the majority of forecast floorspace for Pembrokeshire County and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. No capacity is identified for new convenience floorspace as result of the planned Sainsbury's. The health check assessment concludes that the town centre is vulnerable to changes in the retail market and from the pressures of out of centre development and leakage to online shopping and competitor centres (e.g. Carmarthen). Investment in the town centre is essential to secure the centre's future. However, continued pressure for further out of centre retail and leisure development (e.g. current proposals for Slade Lane) is likely to draw more expenditure away from the town centre and undermine investor confidence if approved. As such, identified capacity for new retail floorspace in Haverfordwest should be directed to the Haverfordwest Town Centre as a priority. This includes future proposals for bulky goods floorspace.

Milford Haven - no capacity is identified for new retail floorspace after taking account of pipeline development at Milford Haven Marina. The centre is not considered to be a particularly strong retail centre, which is evident from the market share analysis with out of centre foodstores serving Milford Haven are achieving a considerably higher market share than stores in the town centre. The town centre health check also confirms that Milford Haven Town Centre is struggling, particularly in terms of its retail function. Demand for new retail in Milford Haven is likely to be limited due to the proximity of Haverfordwest and its out of centre shopping offer, as well as out of centre shopping facilities in Pembroke Dock. Investment in the centre is critical and while the Marina offers the potential to develop Milford Haven's tourism economy, potential opportunities to promote the town centre should be supported. This could involve diversifying the offer towards the leisure sector or seeking to develop a specialist, complementary retail offer, for example antique sales

Pembroke Town and Pembroke Dock

Pembroke Town and Pembroke Dock - the two centres are located in close proximity to each other but serve different functions in terms of their retail offer and customer base. This is reflected in the capacity assessment which identifies the balance of forecast retail floorspace towards Pembroke Dock. No capacity is identified in either centre for additional convenience floorspace as a result of low expenditure retention (Pembroke Town) or planned floorspace (Pembroke Dock). Forecast need for new comparison floorspace shows that some 217 sqm net of new floorspace is identified for Pembroke compared to 713 sqm net for Pembroke Dock by 2036. The health check assessments for the centres highlights key differences between the two centres but the close proximity of the two means that their futures need to be considered together. Hence the location of any further retail development needs to be reviewed in the context of the wider plans for the towns and the availability of sites. While both centres are identified as Primary Key Settlements in the WSP alongside Haverfordwest and Milford Haven, it is evident that Pembroke Town Centre under-performs in terms of its comparative shopping function.

Fishguard - forecast need for new retail floorspace is largely confined to potential opportunities for new comparison goods floorspace. Demand for retail space is likely to be limited to independent retailers. The centre has clearly seen a number of closures in the town in recent years, particularly in the food and drink and hotel sectors, which are clearly important to the overall economy. There is therefore a qualitative need to maintain/improve the retail offer and leisure offer in the town to ensure it remains attractive to the tourist trade and support the overall vibrancy, attractiveness and viability of the centre. This highlights the potential to promote tourism, with priorities directed to bringing vacant units and sites back into use.

Narberth - No forecast need for new retail floorspace is identified for Narberth after taking account of planned development. The centre appears to be performing well with a higher market share in convenience goods expenditure than other centres in the same centre hierarchy position. The centre’s niche comparison retail appeals to the visitor market, highlighting the importance of the tourism sector to the local economy.

In terms of accommodating growth, the study concluded the following for centres in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park:

St Davids - Forecast need for new retail floorspace is focused on comparison goods floorspace, with up to 293 sqm net identified over the study period (2036). Demand for new comparison floorspace is likely to attract tourist related comparison retailers. It will be important that any additional retail floorspace is provided in a format that is sensitive to the setting and character of the area. As such it is likely to be provided within small units and, given the nature of many of the current retail businesses may be linked to the provision of workspace for the craft sector.

Saundersfoot – the centre like other smaller centres in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park retain a small proportion of retail expenditure, which is reflected in limited forecast need for new retail development. Retail offer in Saundersfoot is largely aimed at the tourist market. As such, the retail shopping needs of local residents are largely being met by nearby Tenby. Therefore, it may be preferable to direct forecast capacity identified for Saundersfoot to be allocated to Tenby.

Tenby - Out of the National Park’s four main centres, a higher quantum of forecast need is identified for Tenby, particularly for comparison goods floorspace (515 sqm net). While forecast need is influenced by visitor expenditure the centre is popular with catchment residents for convenience and comparison shopping. Forecast retail need could be accommodated through small scale retail and mixed use developments within or on the edge of the centre.

Newport - forecast need for additional floorspace is focused on new comparison goods floorspace. The health check assessment identified no vacancies in the centre and market demand for new retail has largely been met by changes of use. Due to the size and role of the town centre there is unlikely to be market demand for new retail development in Newport.

Ceredigion County

The market share analysis in Section 4 shows that a high proportion of resident catchment convenience expenditure is retained in the County. Key foodstores in Aberystwyth and Cardigan account for the majority of retained convenience expenditure. Lampeter attracts a reasonable proportion of convenience for a centre of its size, while market shares for the County's smaller centres is low and reflects their role and function in the retail hierarchy. For comparison goods, the centres in Ceredigion retain less than half of catchment expenditure with over a quarter of expenditure lost to competing centres outside of the County; in particular Carmarthen. At centre level, Aberystwyth attracts the greatest proportion of retail expenditure from the catchment followed by Cardigan.

A review of Special Forms of Trading (SFT), which includes online shopping sales shows that 4% of residents in the Ceredigion catchment area purchase convenience goods online. For comparison goods, SFT accounts for over a fifth of all catchment expenditure. The SFT market share increases for the particular comparison goods such as recording media (e.g. CDs, DVDs, music downloads, etc.), audio visual, and books and stationary.

The market share analysis informed forecast need for new retail floorspace for Ceredigion County and centres within. At strategic level, the capacity assessment identifies up 3,453 sqm net of new comparison goods over the study period (up to 2036). The majority of the forecast capacity is directed to Aberystwyth (up to 2,348 sqm net by 2036). There is limited capacity for new convenience floorspace over the study period due to committed retail floorspace, in particular planned retail schemes in Aberystwyth and Cardigan.

Based on alternative population projections (2011-based projections) from the Welsh Government, the assessment results in lower forecast need for new floorspace for Ceredigion and the centres within.

In terms of accommodating growth within the County, the study concluded the following for each centre:

Aberystwyth – the centre accounts for the majority of County-wide forecast capacity, which reflects Aberystwyth's role as the primary shopping destination for the County. The town centre health check confirms that Aberystwyth is vital and viable, which benefits from seasonal visitor trade and a large student population. It offers a wide variety of uses and a good range of independent and national multiple businesses. Carmarthen is a key competitor for the town. However, the presence of a new department store (Marks and Spencer) will help to strengthen Aberystwyth's competitive position and may increase interest from other retailers to locate to the town centre. Future development opportunities should be directed to the town centre and proposals for edge of centre and out of centre proposals should be resisted.

Cardigan - no capacity is identified for new retail floorspace after taking account of pipeline development; namely a proposed Sainsbury's foodstore. However, we understand that there is uncertainty as to whether the scheme will be delivered, which releases capacity for new retail floorspace; particularly for comparison goods. The town centre heath check confirms that the centre provide a good mix of uses with the comparison sector particularly well represented. However, the overall offer and variety is limited with a strong discount orientation

Lampeter - need for new retail floorspace in Lampeter is largely influenced by inflow from visitor expenditure, but also from the centre's relatively high student population. As such forecast need for new retail is supported by students and visitor inflow. The Sainsbury's foodstore serves as an important anchor for attracting shoppers and supporting linked trips with other services. The health check assessment identifies the centre 'healthy'. However, vacancies have increased in recent year along with a decline retail offer. In addition, food & drink provision is also currently under-represented.

Aberaeron and Llandysul - centres are considered side by side due to their similarities in terms of retail capacity, town centre profile, and their market share of expenditure from the Ceredigion catchment. Aberaeron is a larger centre and is a popular tourist location. The range of retail and services on offer is markedly different to Llandysul, which serves a more local service function. Forecast retail need for both centres is focused on opportunities for new comparison goods provision; demand for which is likely to be limited to independent retailers.

Changes to the Retail Hierarchy

The study examined the role and function of centres within the three authority areas, taking account of the findings of the market share analysis, health check assessment and capacity assessments. From this we have provided recommendations on a combined retail hierarchy for the three authorities.

A five tier hierarchy is proposed, which is summarised below:

Level 1 – Sub-Regional Centres:	Aberystwyth and Haverfordwest
Level 2 – Primary Town Centres:	Cardigan, Lampeter, Pembroke, Pembroke Dock and Tenby
Level 3 – Secondary Town Centres:	Fishguard, Milford Haven and Narberth
Level 4 – Tertiary Town Centres:	Aberaeron, Saundersfoot and St David's
Level 5 – Local Service Centres:	Llandysul, Newport and Tregaron

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