

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

STOCKBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE

March 2017



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1. INTRODUCTION

Stockbridge is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre) defined, protected and promoted as a hub for a wide range of activities from shopping, providing local services and as a leisure destination. This draft sets out an approach to the **change of use of shop units** within Stockbridge Town Centre.

The LDP provides a framework for a tailored approach for individual town centres set out in Supplementary Guidance. Statutory Supplementary Guidance is prepared under Section 22 of the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and aims to deliver the policies and principles set out in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP). The Supplementary Guidance has been prepared in accordance with **Policy Ret 9: Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Centres** and applies to all shop units within the town centre. It aims to deliver two LDP objectives set out in Part 2, Section 6 (Shopping and Leisure) of the Plan:

- To maintain the existing and proposed broad distribution of centres throughout the city and sustain their vitality and viability;
and
- To improve the appearance, quality and attractiveness of all centres.

Once adopted, following consultation, the Supplementary Guidance will form part of the statutory development plan. Applications for change of use must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. To assist in interpreting the LDP the Council issues non-statutory guidance. Guidance for Businesses provides guidance on change of use. This is a material consideration in the determination of applications and should be considered alongside this Supplementary Guidance.

This Supplementary Guidance has been informed by a public life street assessment carried out by design consultants for the Council, which explores how the town centre should evolve to maximise the potential for benefitting public life.

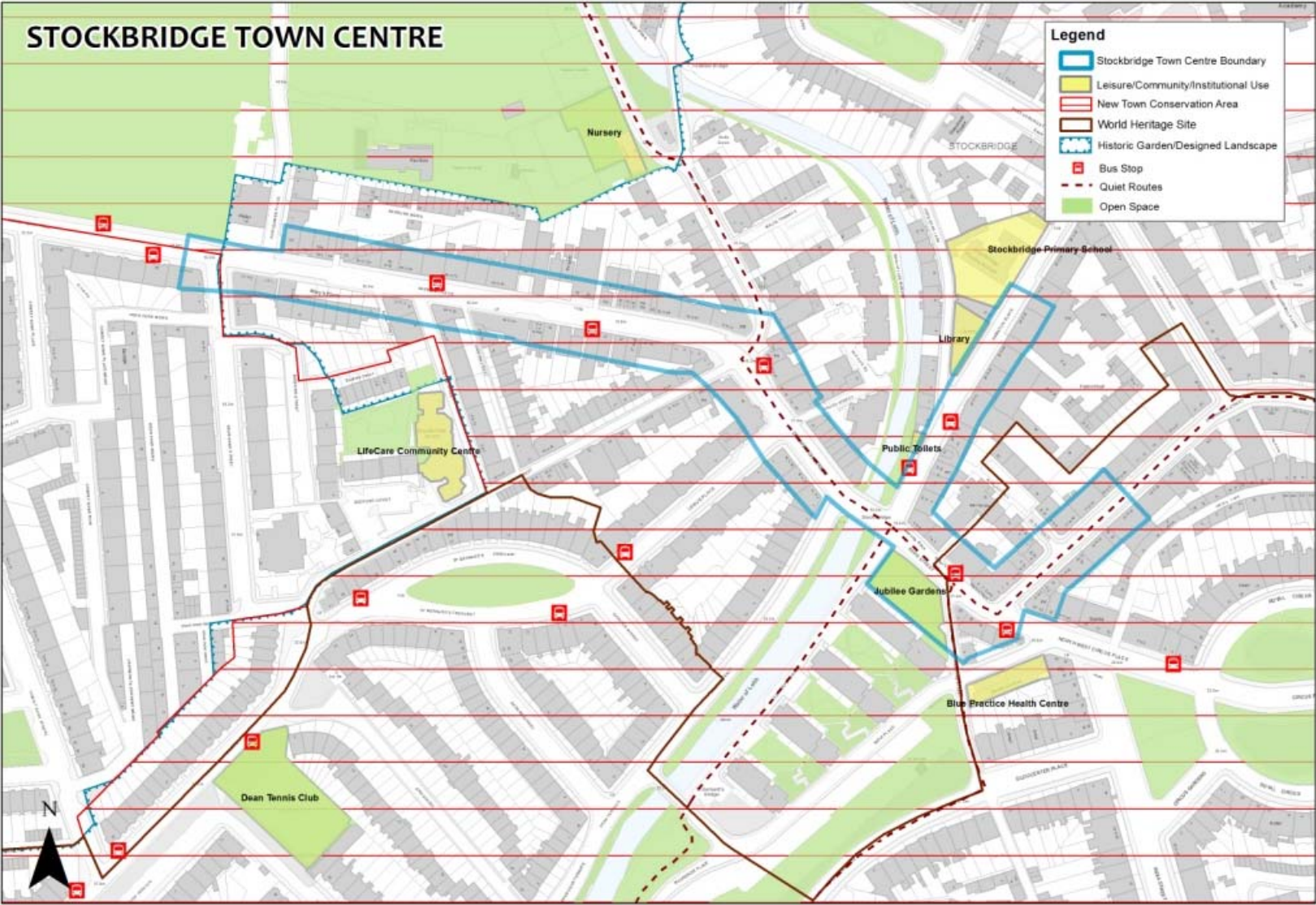
2. THE TOWN CENTRE

Stockbridge Town Centre is located north of the city centre. As illustrated in map 1 overleaf, it starts at the junction of St Stephen Street and Kerr Street, and continues along Raeburn Place, taking in side streets such as Hamilton Place. The historical expansion of the New Town from around 1813 increased the demand for property, leading to the incremental replacement and development of Stockbridge village. Despite such historical changes, Stockbridge has retained much of its village character and atmosphere, comprising of small shop units and a variety of house types including low rise colonies and terraces. For this reason, it is not quite as densely populated as some of the other town centres (approx 5,000 people within a walking distance of approximately 400m).

The area has a number of listed buildings. Being within close proximity to the Water of Leith, there are also a number of prominent historical buildings and features of interest. The Town Centre itself lies within the New Town Conservation Area and the New Towns Garden and Dean Historic Garden/Designed Landscape Inventory Site. The southern part of the Town Centre along St Stephen Street, is located within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. The World Heritage Management Plan is under review. Within these designations, specific LDP policies apply to protect and enhance the appearance and setting of the city.

It is a diverse friendly Town Centre with a village identity, supported by a community council. Jubilee Gardens is located within the Town Centre, home to the popular Stockbridge Market; a central meeting place for public life every Tuesday and Sunday. The average number of pedestrians observed per day from the public life street assessment was found to be lower than some of the other town centres. Stockbridge is smaller in size, with fewer people to draw on for local shopping needs, and by its location adjacent to the Water of Leith, it successfully performs the role of both leisure and shopping destination.

Map 1: Stockbridge

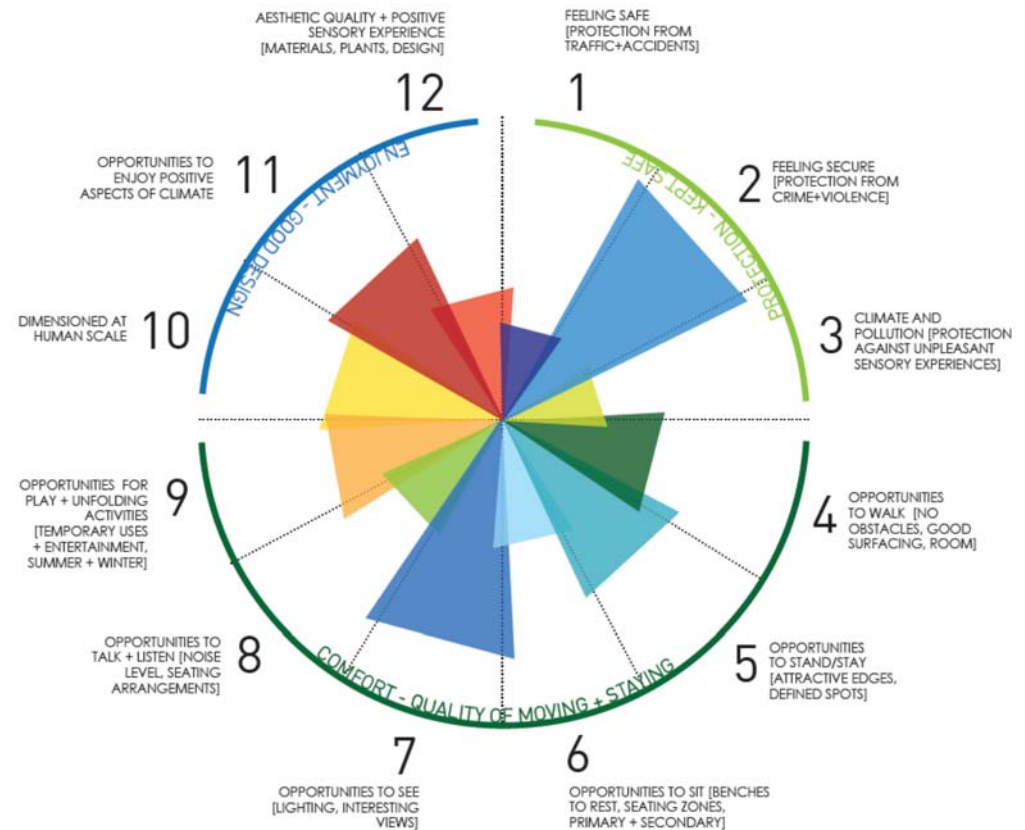


KEY FINDINGS

A health check has been carried out to assess the Town Centre’s strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience. To assess how the Town Centre functions in terms of pedestrian and cyclist movement and as a place to visit, a study called a public life street assessment has also been undertaken. This study used a mixture of techniques, including direct observation (pedestrian counts, behavioural mapping and tracing studies), user interviews and land use surveys.

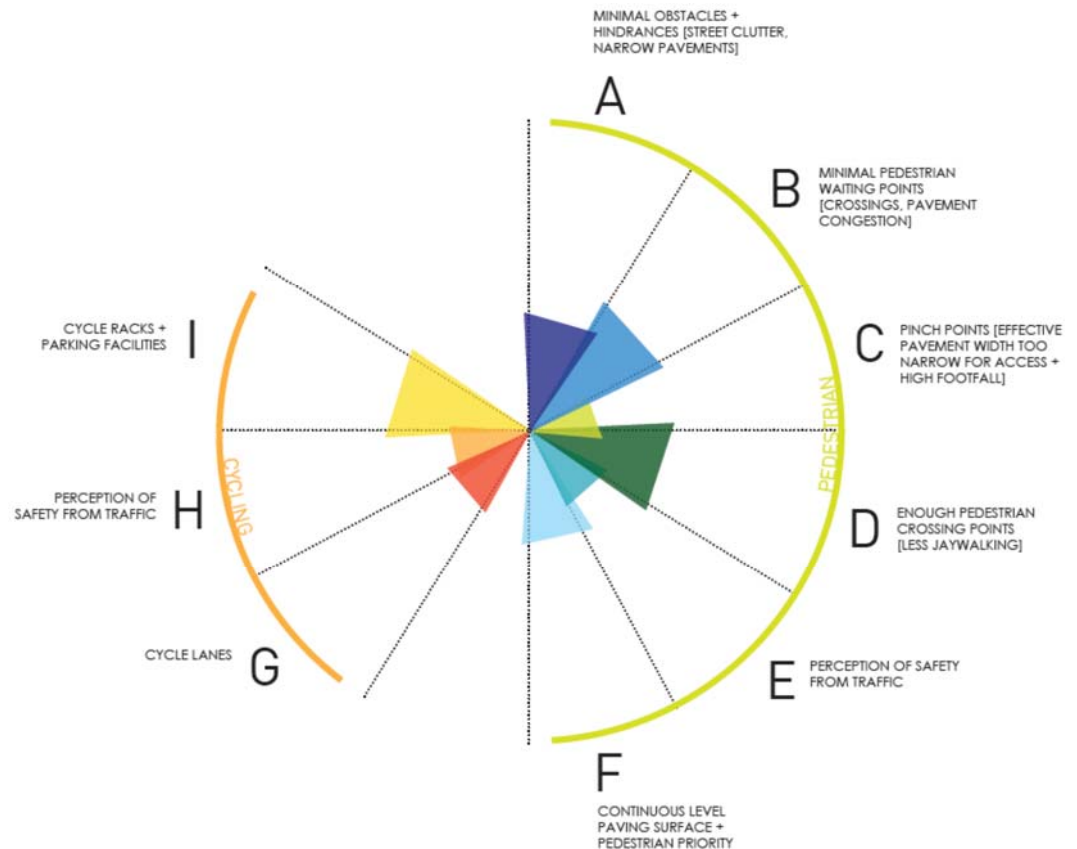
Place

The place function was assessed against 12 quality criteria. Stockbridge had mixed results in terms of place function. The town centre scored highly for opportunities to see and protection from crime and violence. The diversity of small scale shops also provide visual interest and a desire to stop and stay. It scored less well for other qualities, including aesthetic quality, perception of safety from traffic, and protection against climate and pollution. The biggest hindrance is the prioritisation of vehicles and narrow corner pavements, as well as the prominence of parked cars, risk of traffic to cyclists/pedestrians and limited opportunities to sit often restricting people's desire to stop and stay, and talk and listen.



Pedestrian movement

Stockbridge scored very low for most aspects of pedestrian and cyclist movement, despite cycle routes passing through. A key issue relates to perceptions of safety from traffic. These low scores are the result of narrow pavements, pinch points, street clutter, unlevel paving surfaces, a lack of pedestrian priority and a lack of dedicated cycle lanes. Medium scores were found for minimum pedestrian waiting points, enough pedestrian crossing points and cycle racks. These elements scored better due to slightly improved pedestrian walking conditions along the north side of Raeburn Place.



Overview map

The analysis diagram overleaf taken from the public life street assessment has been compiled based on a synthesis of researcher observations and diaries, sub studies by the research team and analysis of the data collected from test walks and direct observation at key locations.



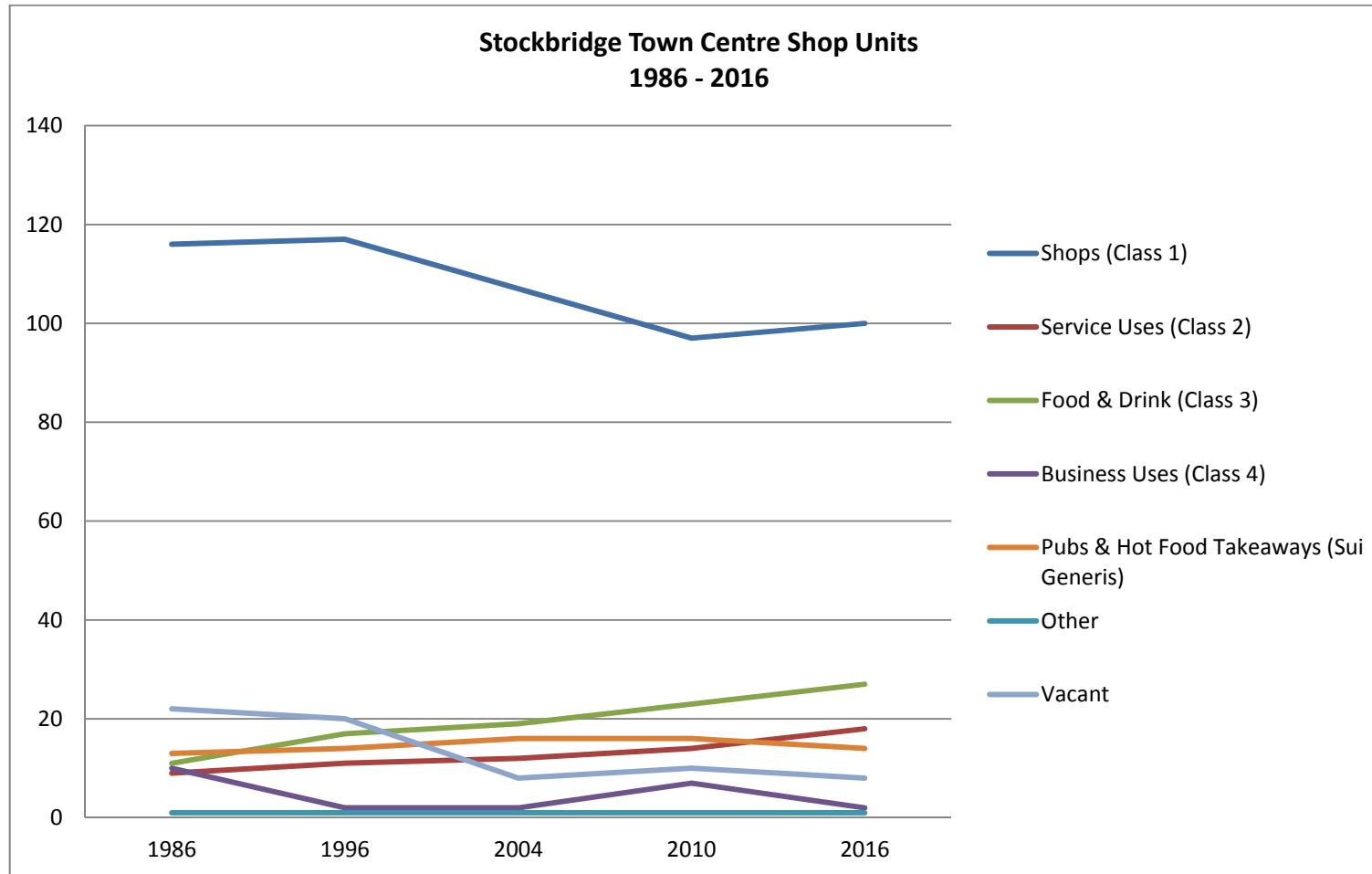
Shops and other town centre uses

Stockbridge Town Centre consists of a mix of mostly smaller shops and eating places. There are also two small supermarket sized units. Similar to Edinburgh's other town centres, the shops and other uses are predominantly located in ground floor units under traditional tenements. The exceptions to this are Raeburn Place where single storey projections from terraces are common, and the northern side of Deanhaugh Street, where the majority of the units are single storey in height with no residential above.

Where a unit is used as a shop it is necessary to get planning permission from the Council to change to another use. However, the planning system has limited control over what shops sell or which company occupies a shop. National retailers are commonplace, particularly along sections of Deanhaugh Street and Raeburn Place. There are also a number of high-end independent specialist operators within the Town Centre. These are particularly concentrated towards the southern end of the Town Centre, along streets such as St Stephen Street. Cafes and restaurants are well represented and spread out fairly evenly throughout the town centre, resulting in a well distributed level of active evening uses. The area is also well served by services such as hairdressers, pharmacies, a post office, a bank, an opticians, and repair shops. There are no dentists or doctors within the town centre boundary itself, but are located within the surrounding area.

The mix of uses has been monitored in city-wide shop surveys periodically undertaken since 1986. As identified in the chart below, the survey shows a steady decline in class 1 (retail) use and subsequent increase in other uses since 1986. It also shows a decrease in the vacancy rates, with a slight increase in 2010. The current vacancy rate is 5%, which is below the 2015 Edinburgh average of 7% and significantly below the national average which is between 9 and 13%. Overall, the proportion of units in shop use has fallen to 58% from 64% in 1986. This is a trend which is evident across other town centres. Within those units used as shops there has been a decline in the number of butchers, bakers, fishmongers, and grocers. There has also been a significant increase in the number of charity shops; 15 in 2016, compared with only 5 in 1986. The proportion of units in use for professional services such as opticians,

banks, solicitors, beauty salons has increased from 5% in 1986 to 11% in 2016. The proportion of units in business use (class 4) has declined over the period between 1986 and 2016; 1% of units were in this category at 2016, compared to 5% in 1986. There has been an increase in the proportion of units in use as cafes and restaurants from 6% in 1986 to 16% in 2016.



Notwithstanding the number of shop uses, the area also benefits from having some community, leisure and public uses located within and in close proximity, such as Water of Leith, Botanic Gardens, Inverleith Park, Edinburgh Academicals Sport Ground, Stockbridge Library, Stockbridge Market and LifeCare Community Centre. Employment in Stockbridge Town Centre is relatively high at 1,200. Re-letting potential is also high. Rents have increased or remained stable over recent years. The retail rent (2 years ending September 2015) is £24/sq ft; the highest of all eight town centres outside the city centre.

Physical structure

Stockbridge is a compact, non-linear Town Centre which enables more of a nucleus of activity and identity. There is a positive architectural and historic character with many features and assets of interest within the Town Centre itself and the wider area, for example the Water of Leith, Old Stockbridge Meat Market and the Stock Bridge. The condition of most buildings and features within the Town Centre is good. Where buildings have been traditionally constructed from stone they are generally in good condition.

The public life street assessment found that overall, Stockbridge Town Centre could, with its older facade structure and great diversity of high quality frontages, be considered as having almost exclusively active facades compared to the other town centres. There is rich detailing in the Town Centre with potted plants along the facades and awnings extending shops into the street, all adding to the village atmosphere. There are, however, few trees and soft landscaping within the public realm, with the exception of the Water of Leith.

SWOT analysis

The overall analysis is summarised here in a SWOT analysis of the town centre.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Compact non-linear town centre provides for a friendly village atmosphere and strong sense of community	Narrow pavements and prevalence of bollards hinder pedestrian movement	Make the connection clearer to the Water of Leith to enhance wayfinding.	Heavy traffic at weekday rush hour
Nearby parks, walking routes and green space	Priority of vehicles over pedestrians, cyclists and place function.	Remove bollards	Perception of drivers is that it is an arterial route rather than a place for people.
Jubilee Gardens and Stockbridge Market act as a central meeting place for public life	Parking has been prioritised throughout the town centre	Extend the public realm at key points along the Town Centre, for example at the entrance to Bernard's Row.	Resistance from businesses/residents to reduce parking.
Low vacancy rate and diverse mix of shops and services	Lack of cycle facilities including dedicated cycle lanes and enough cycle parking.		
Positive architectural and historic character and features of interest			
Good public transport			

Current health

The overall analysis from the public life street assessment and shop survey is summarised in the above SWOT analysis of the town centre. A decline in the number of units in retail use is evident, however, this reflects trends across all town centres. Just over half of the shop units in the Town Centre are still in retail use, and the vacancy rate is low, indicating a relatively healthy centre overall.

3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The public life street assessment and health check highlight areas for improvement in the Town Centre, particularly relating to the movement and place function. In common with other town centres, there is great potential to improve the movement and place function of Stockbridge Town Centre. The vision for Stockbridge is to;

- increase the relative importance of pedestrian and cycle movement, whilst recognising the importance of Raeburn Place and Deanhaugh Street as important through traffic routes;
- promote and facilitate staying times by enhancing the character, identity, visual interest and comfort; and
- ensure a mix of uses to meet the needs and demands of the population.

The Supplementary Guidance goes some way to achieve the wider vision through the following 10 principles, which should be considered when submitting and assessing a planning application for a change of use within Stockbridge Town Centre;

1. Supporting high quality shopfront design (see the Council's Guidance for Businesses and Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Guidance for details).
2. Ensuring active frontages to the street by permitting glazing which will allow for natural surveillance, visual interest on the street and encourage street users to stay. This may also prohibit the change of use from shop use to residential in ground floor units.
3. Supporting outdoor seating where pavements are wider and micro-climate is favourable, for example the junction of Raeburn Place and St Bernard's Row.
4. Supporting class 3 food and drink uses on corner units where there is an opportunity to activate the public street life.
5. Maximising opportunities for formal and informal outdoor seating incorporating shelter in the form of trees, planters or shop front awnings at key points along the town centre.

6. Ensuring development makes a positive contribution to the public realm by meeting the Street Design Guidance and Edinburgh Design Guidance.
7. Incorporating and enhancing natural and built features where they can contribute positively to the Town Centre, for example the Water of Leith.
8. Supporting additional cycle parking facilities at key points along the Town Centre.
9. Taking opportunities to remove street clutter and other redundant items identified in any relevant street audits prepared by the Council or Living Streets.
10. Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for storage of waste, internally and externally.

A number of other programmes and plans have the potential to address some of the other issues highlighted in the public life street assessment:

- A bus shelter replacement programme has recently taken place, including replacement bus shelters with advertising panels in the town centre. Future replacement programmes will present an opportunity to improve placement of shelters.
- A review of Conservation Area Character Appraisals is underway. Appraisals are intended to manage change and set out opportunities for enhancement.
- The World Heritage Site Management Plan is currently under review.
- Road and Footway Investment – Capital Programme
- The Council's Wayfinding Project. This could improve navigation, wayfinding and appreciation of assets such as Water of Leith.

- A locality based approach to service delivery operates in Edinburgh. The town centre is within the North West Locality. Locality Improvement Plans are currently being prepared and are due to be in place by October 2017. These will set out the future priorities for the area and consider opportunities to enhance the local sense of identity and belonging.
- QuietRoutes – Edinburgh’s local walking and cycling routes.
- Stockbridge will introduce a 20mph speed limit at the end of February 2017. Reduced traffic speed will improve the sense of security for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Town Centre has also benefitted from the [trade waste policy](#) that only allows trade waste to be presented on the street/outside premises for one-hour within set collection windows.

4. CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY

The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) defines the boundary of Stockbridge Town Centre within which Policy Ret 9 and this draft Supplementary Guidance applies. Paragraph 261 of the LDP states that supplementary guidance may recommend changes to the Town Centre boundary to be included in the next LDP. It is considered that there is the potential to include:

- The ground floor units proposed as part of the new Accie's development along the north side of Raeburn Place; and
- The units on the north side of North West Circus Place (1-8).

PREVIOUS APPROACH

The policy approach set out in the Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP) (now superseded by the LDP) was to restrict changes of use in shop units within identified 'frontages'. The ECLP identified three 'primary frontages', within which the change of use to a non-shop use was only permitted where no more than one third of all units would be in non-shop use and it would not result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses. Using the 2016 shop survey, the percentage of non-shop uses in each of the frontages defined in the ECLP is shown in the table below.

Frontage defined in ECLP	% of frontage in non-shop use	Number of vacant units
4 to 102 Raeburn Place	25%	0
1 to 47 Deanhaugh Street	31%	1
1 to 77 Raeburn Place	25%	1

Based on the shop survey carried out in 2016, none of the frontages defined in the ECLP exceed the threshold of no more than one third (33%) of shop units in non-retail use. Vacancy rates within these frontages are also low. Outwith the frontages defined above, 45% are in non-shop use, still leaving the remainder of the Town Centre in majority shop use.

PROPOSED APPROACH

This Supplementary Guidance proposes to retain a 'frontage' approach to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs of the local population. The identification of frontages will assist in ensuring distribution of retail facilities throughout the centre to provide for the needs of the local population.

It is proposed that all frontages are retained, as it is considered that they each perform an important retail function. The remainder of the Town Centre outwith these frontages provide for more speciality shopping needs. For these reasons, the Supplementary Guidance does not propose that any of the frontages are removed or no new ones are added.

The proposed approach also removes the need to assess the change of use against whether it will result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses, and in doing so, provides greater flexibility in where non-shop uses can be located within the frontage, so long as the overall percentage of non-shop use remains under 33%.

CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

Changing a shop to a non-shop use will always require planning permission. Some other changes of use are permitted development, for example, a cafe (Class 3) being turned into a shop unit (Class 1). The Scottish Government Circular 1/1998 contains guidance on use classes.

The two draft policies below (**Policy S1 and Policy S2**) set out when a shop unit can change from a shop use to a non-shop use.

Policy STC 1 – Alternative Use of Shop Units in Defined Frontages

In the frontages defined in the table below (Map 2), the change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will be permitted provided:

- a) as a result of permitting the change of use, **no more than one third** of the total number of units in the frontage will be in non-shop use; and
- b) the proposal is for an appropriate commercial or community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Frontages
4 - 102 Raeburn Place
1 - 47 Deanhaugh Street
1 – 77 Raeburn Place

Justification

The identification of frontages provides a focus for retail use within the town centre. This policy continues this focus by protecting the areas where there is an identified concentration of retail use. These frontages are below the 33% non-shop use threshold, meaning that there is still potential for other uses to locate here should there be demand. To ensure continued protection of core retail within these frontages, the draft Supplementary Guidance proposes to continue this threshold, which still allows for a diverse mix of other appropriate uses. This is critical to the continued health of the Town Centre.

This policy also removes the need to assess the change of use against whether it will result in four or more consecutive non-shop uses, and in doing so, provides greater flexibility in where non-shop uses can be located within the frontage, so long as the overall percentage of non-shop use remains under 33%.

Policy STC 2 – Alternative Use of Shop Units – Elsewhere

For those locations not within a designated Frontage, but elsewhere within the Town Centre boundary, a change of use from a shop to a non-shop use will be permitted provided a proposal is:

- Class 2 – financial, professional or other services
- Class 3 – food and drink uses
- An appropriate commercial, community or leisure use which would complement the character of the centre, support the main shopping function, and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.

Justification

Frontages are used to ensure that a minimum percentage of units are retained in shop use to meet the basic shopping needs and provision of the local population. Outwith the areas defined in Policy S1 and S2, there are a wide range of uses. This policy will provide a flexible approach which will allow appropriate uses, whilst accepting that retailing and the role of town centres are changing, to ensure vitality and viability of the town centre overall. This should allow for units to capitalise on the outdoor street spaces, improving the public realm and providing for an active public life, particularly at key nodes like St Bernard's Row.

Residential use

National planning policy states that planning for town centres should consider opportunities for promoting residential use where this fits with local need and demand. All of Edinburgh's town centres, including Stockbridge, have an already large residential population

despite the boundary being tightly drawn around the main concentrations of the shopping offer. For placemaking purposes it is important that ground floor uses help bring activity onto the street. Residential units at ground floor level tend to add little vitality to the town centre. Stockbridge already has a large population living within walking distance of the main shopping streets and within the town centre itself, changes from shop use to residential is not supported.

5. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

LDP POLICIES

Other relevant policies in the Edinburgh [Local Development Plan](#) include:

- Ret 1 Town Centres First
- Ret 3 Town Centres
- Ret 7 Entertainment and Leisure Developments
- Ret 11 Food and Drink Establishments
- Des 13 Shopfront
- Env 1 World Heritage Sites
- Env 3 Listed Buildings - Setting
- Env 4 Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions
- Env 5 Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings
- Env 6 Conservation Areas - Development

Policy Ret 3 generally supports shop uses in town centres. Policy Ret 7 supports leisure and entertainment facilities in town centres. Policies Ret 11 considers the impact on nearby residents for proposals such as public houses and hot-food takeaways. Des 13 supports improvements to shop fronts.

GUIDANCE FOR BUSINESSES

The document interprets policies in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan. It provides guidance to assist businesses in preparing applications to change the use of a property.

ONE-DOOR APPROACH

The One Door Approach to Development Consents aims to give the customer all the information they need at the start of the development process. Food and drink, public house and hot-food takeaway uses will often require other consents and are subject to separate controls by licensing for:

- [Alcohol](#)
- [Hours of operation](#)
- [Outdoor pavement seating](#)

For more information on these, see the Council's website on the [One Door Approach](#) to development consents, the [Council's Guidance for Businesses](#) or contact the [Business Gateway](#).

EDINBURGH STREET DESIGN GUIDANCE

[Edinburgh's new Street Design Guidance](#) brings together previously separate CEC guidance on street design to achieve coherence and co-ordination across the city, with the ultimate goal of providing the people of Edinburgh with a world-class network of vibrant, safe, attractive, effective and enjoyable streets. The guidance will apply to a range of Council services who manage streets for various purposes.

EDINBURGH DESIGN GUIDANCE

The [Edinburgh Design Guidance](#) sets out the Council's expectations for the design of new development in Edinburgh. The guidance is intended for all new buildings and should be used as a point of reference, a basis for the planning, design and communication of new development proposals and a material consideration in assessing planning applications. It aims to provide guidance on how to comply with the policies in the local plans, explain the key ideas which need to be considered during the design process, give

examples of good quality design, and set out the requirements for design and access statements. The guidance is currently under review.

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Conservation Area Character Appraisals help to manage change in a conservation area. They describe what is special about each conservation area. They help in making decisions on proposals that affect the area's special character. The New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal covers Stockbridge.

WORLD HERITAGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

There is a management plan for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage site which covers the period 2011-2016. UNESCO requires every World Heritage Site to have a plan which says how the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the site will be protected. OUV is the collection of things which make the area special. The management plan informs a separate action plan. The management plan is currently being reviewed.

6. DEFINITIONS

Class 1 shop use - A unit used for the sale of goods to visiting members of the public, for example, post office, sale of tickets, cold food for consumption off the premises, and hairdressing. This is further defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997.

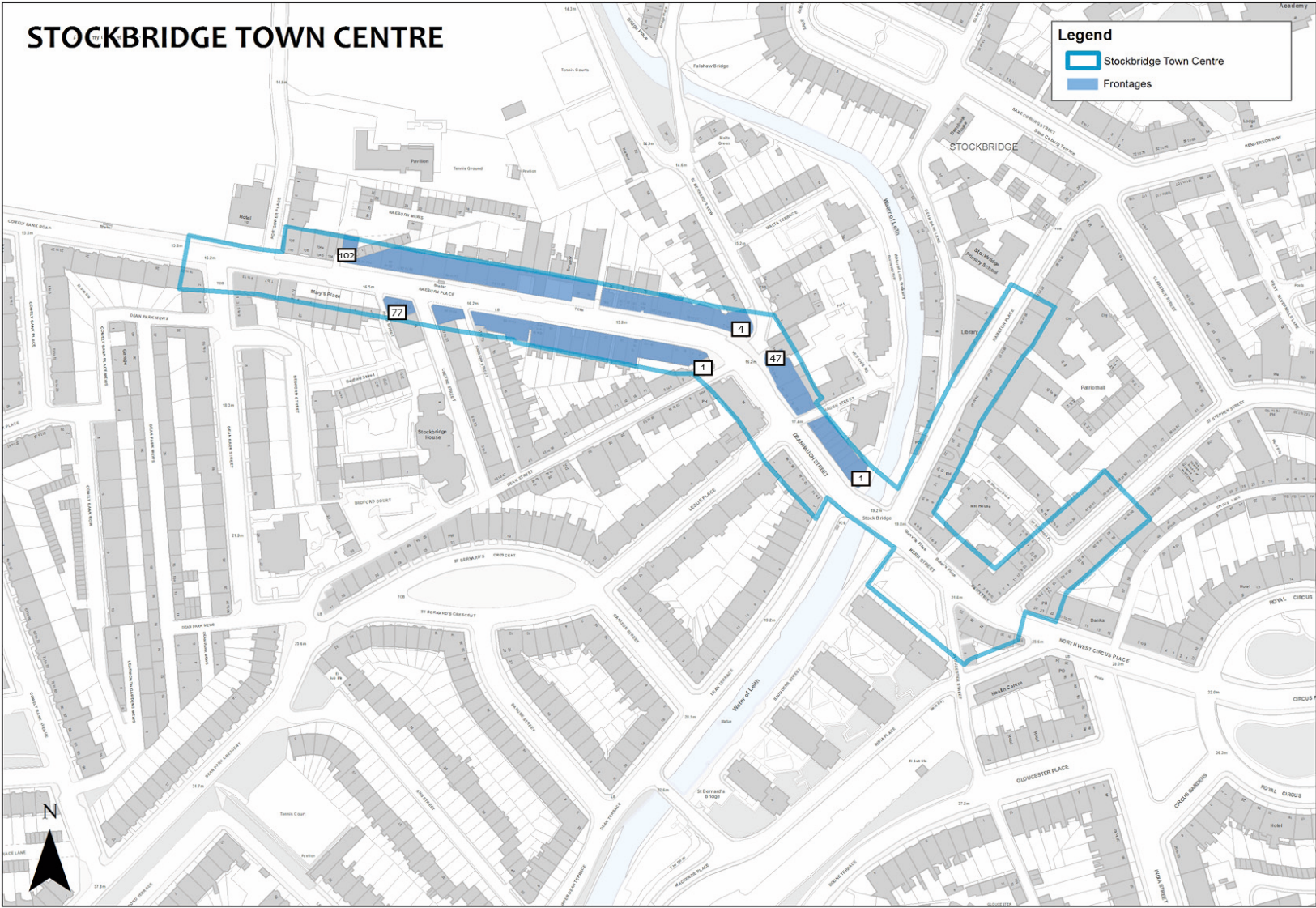
Shop unit - As defined in the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016), a shop unit is a premises accessed directly onto the street and designed primarily for shop use.

Non-shop uses - Changing a shop to a non-shop use is known as a 'change of use' and will always require planning permission. Examples of non-shop uses are:

- **Class 2 Service Uses** – e.g. lawyers, accountants, estate agents, health centres, tanning salons and pawn brokers.
- **Class 3 Food and Drink** (consumed on premises) – e.g. restaurant, cafe, snack bar (not a public house or hot food take-away).
- **Class 4 Business Use** – general office, light industry or research and development, which can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of any residential area.
- Betting shops, pay day loan shops, pubs and hot food takeaways are classified as **Sui Generis**.
- **Commercial Use** – e.g. Office
- **Community Use** – e.g. Social and cultural activities
- **Leisure Use** – e.g. Cinema and gymnasium

Some changes of use are permitted development, for example, a cafe (Class 3) being turned into a shop unit (Class 1). The Scottish Government Circular 1/1998 contains guidance on use classes.

MAP 2: FRONTAGES





HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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by 30th May 2017