

Appendix 1

**Sites considered as part of Sequential Assessment within and on
the edge of Woolton and Belle Vale District Centres**

Introduction

This sequential site assessment has been prepared in support of the application for outline planning permission for the demolition of the Bridge Inn and other structures / buildings and the erection of a 1,580 sqm (gross) Class A1 supermarket and 120 sqm replacement bookmakers, with associated car parking (100 standard spaces plus 10 disabled bays), cycle parking, service yard, and hard and soft landscaping, all accessed via Childwall Valley Road, on land currently occupied by the Bridge Inn and William Hill bookmakers (marked blue below), Belle Vale, Liverpool. The site boundary is shown on Figure 1 below.



Figure 1, shows the site boundary for the proposed medium food retail development.

This assessment has considered sites and premises within and on the edge of the two district centres of Belle Vale and Woolton. This is based on pre-application advice received from the LPA.

Site investigations took place over two working days in May 2015.

The aim of the assessment was to interrogate potential alternative sites / premises that might accommodate the proposed development, either within the District Centres or on

their edges. By 'edge of centre', we have worked on the basis of 300m from the boundary of the two District Centres as defined in the Liverpool UDP.

Possible alternative sites were assessed on the basis of three criteria, namely the site's / premises' :

- Availability; and
- Suitability; and
- Viability.

All of these criteria must be satisfied for a site to be considered a reasonable alternative.

To reflect Government advice, our client has adopted a flexible approach in respect of the supermarket. A sizeable store is proposed to serve the Belle Vale / Woolton area. Whilst that area is served by existing convenience stores, including the Morrisons superstore on the edge of Belle Vale DC, plus mid sized Tesco and Sainsbury foodstores in / on the edge of Woolton Village, the range of 'offer' in terms of foodstores is fairly limited. Aside from the large edge of centre Morrisons store in Belle Vale and a small number of much smaller outlets within the main shopping centre, there is no other sizeable offer serving the centre (either inside or close by). The starting point is therefore to identify a site for a sizeable operation that will add meaningfully to the qualitative and quantitative offer in and around Belle Vale (and to a lesser extent Woolton, which is arguably better served by both sizeable Tesco and Sainsbury stores, the large Asda superstore (out of centre) at Hunts Cross, and (slightly more distant) the recently extended Tesco superstore on the southern edge of Allerton Road District Centre.

So, while our client is prepared to be flexible in its offer, the starting point is a sizeable convenience store capable of accommodating a notable comparison offer (which is standard in most convenience stores), together with sufficient storage, parking and servicing space. As such, while a store of 1,580 sqm is the starting point, any sites / premises moderately smaller than that, but which would not severely compromise the starting point proposition / business concept, would be considered as potential alternatives (had these been available).

Turning to the second part of the proposal, we question whether it is strictly necessary or appropriate to demand sequential assessment for the proposed bookmakers. This unit is very small – only 120 sqm – and is intended as a direct replacement to the William Hill operation that currently occupies the site. In effect, this is a like for like replacement intended to serve existing customers. It is not a new operation that might be expected to satisfy sequential assessment.

In this regard, we note the recent (March 2015) stance taken by the LPA in respect of a proposal for a convenience store of 374 sqm (more than three times the size of the

replacement bookmakers in this case) under application ref: 14F/1140, when it was somewhat inexplicably determined that sequential assessment was not necessary in that case :

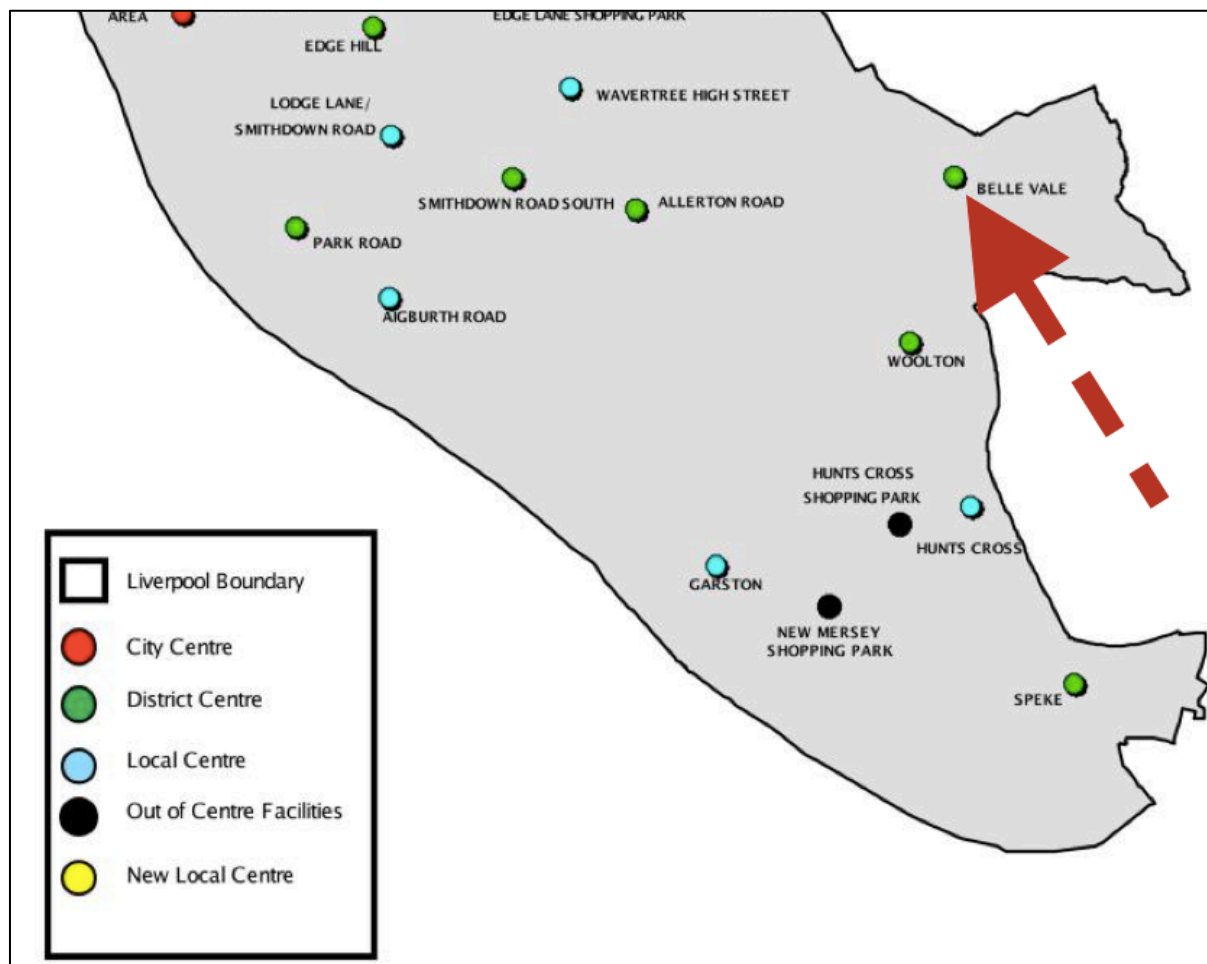
At the pre-application stage the applicant submitted information that demonstrated that the catchment of the proposed retail store would be localised given its retail floor space and 'convenience' nature. It was established that a sequential test (to demonstrate that the use could not be located in an existing local or district centre) was not required in this instance and it is accepted by the Head of Planning that the scale of the proposed retail unit would not detract from the viability or vitality of nearby designated centres. Paragraph 26 of the NPPF advises that a retail impact assessment would only be required for sites that provide more than 2,500m² therefore this was not required.

Nevertheless, due consideration has been given to potentially alternative sites for the bookmakers. Again, while flexibility has been considered, there are two fundamental drivers behind this part of the proposal, namely :

1. The replacement facility must serve the needs of existing customers, the overwhelming majority of whom reside in the Belle Vale area, and many of whom are elderly customers without access to their own transport. In this regard, looking to locate this facility in Woolton District Centre would clearly be a nonsense, in that it would / could not serve the needs of the existing customer base of Belle Vale.
2. Opening times. Late night opening for most bookmakers (including the existing facility) are fundamental to their success, popularity and viability. William Hill (who will occupy the replacement unit) have confirmed that lesser opening hours (ie daytime only) would decimate their business operation.

District Centres

The pre-application advice of the LPA has requested considered of two District Centres – Woolton and Belle Vale. The location of these (and other) District Centres is marked on the plan below, and the large arrow points (crudely) to the application site.



The precise boundaries of District Centres are defined in the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map (see figures below).

Belle Vale

Belle Vale is a 1970s purpose built indoor shopping centre containing a mix of small to medium sized units.

In November 2009 the LPA appointed consultants GL Hearn to produce its '*District & Local Centres Study*'. At paragraph 3.42, that describes Belle Vale thus :

'The Centre lacks A4 and A5 units, and effectively shuts at 5.30pm after which only Morrisons still trades (until 8-9pm). In the evenings, the centre is very much a 'dead space' which is unattractive and intimidating.'

Those opening hours clearly prevent occupation of any unit by William Hill, as that would undermine the company's trading model (which includes evening opening).

The UDP map showing the boundary of the District Centre (below) makes it clear that the large Morrisons store falls outside the District Centre (and is therefore an edge of centre facility).





Figure 2, shows the spatial extent of Belle Vale District Centre as defined in the adopted UDP [nb the Morrisons store is located outside the District Centre boundary]

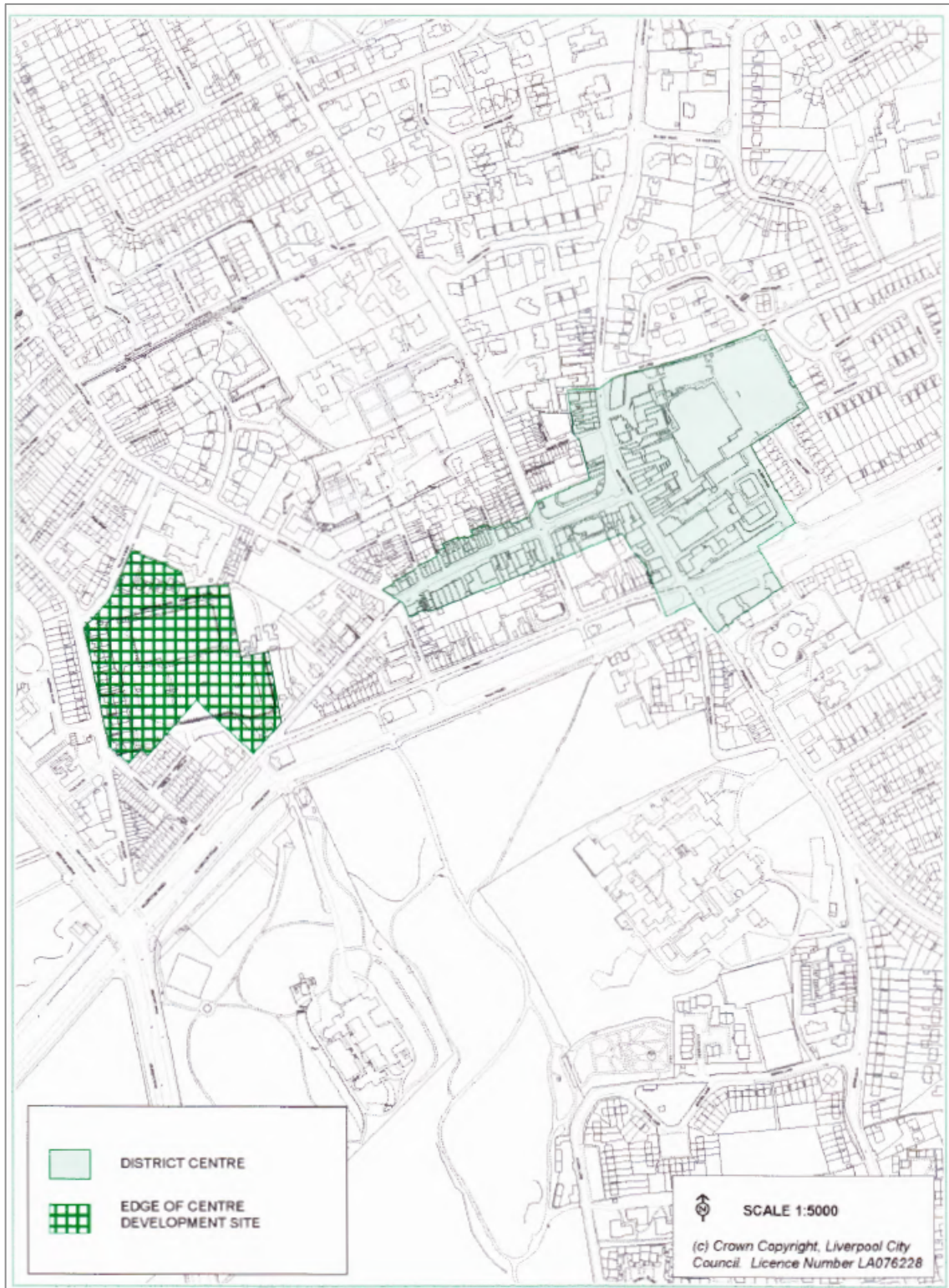


Figure 3, shows the spatial extent of the Woolton Village District Centre

Belle Vale District Centre:

Site: 1

Location: Belle Vale Shopping Centre, Unit 28



Site/Premises Area: Circa 80 – 100 sqm

Availability: Market boards indicate that the unit is available to rent.

Suitability: The unit could accommodate a small retail outlet and or café.

Viability: The unit is too small to accommodate either of the proposed developments and does not have sufficient provisions for parking, access and servicing. The opening times of the shopping centre would be detrimental to the current operating times of the bookmakers, 9:00 – 21:30 (Mon – Fri) and would thus effect the operational capacity of the proposed bookmaker development.

Site: 2

Location: Belle Vale Shopping Centre Unit 23



Site/Premises Area: Circa 80 sqm

Availability: There are no market boards indicating availability, thus we conclude that the unit is unavailable.

Suitability: The unit could accommodate a small retail development.

Viability: The unit is too small to accommodate either of the proposed developments and does not have sufficient provisions for parking, access and servicing. The opening times of the shopping centre would be detrimental to the current operating times of the bookmakers, 9:00 – 21:30 (Mon – Fri) and would thus effect the operational capacity of the proposed bookmaker development.

Site: 3

Location: Belle Vale Shopping Centre Unit



Site/Premises Area: Circa 80 sqm

Availability: Advertisements indicate that the unit is currently being renovated, thus we conclude that the site is unavailable.

Suitability: The unit could accommodate a small retail development and or café.

Viability: The unit is too small to accommodate either of the proposed developments and does not have sufficient provisions for parking, access and servicing. The opening times of the shopping centre would be detrimental to the current operating times of the bookmakers, 9:00 – 21:30 (Mon – Fri) and would thus effect the operational capacity of the proposed bookmaker development.

Site: 4

Location: Belle Vale Shopping Centre Unit 6



Site/Premises Area: Circa 80 – 100 sqm

Availability: Market boards indicate that the unit is available to rent.

Suitability: The unit could accommodate a small retail facility.

Viability: The unit is too small to accommodate either of the proposed developments and does not have sufficient provisions for parking, access and servicing. The opening times of the shopping centre would be detrimental to the current operating times of the bookmakers, 9:00 – 21:30 (Mon – Fri) and would thus effect the operational capacity of the proposed bookmaker development.