

Question 28

Policy 26 – Retail hierarchy and development in commercial centres

1. The Trust agrees with the proposed hierarchy set out on p 134-5 of the *Preferred Options* report, and welcomes many of the proposals within the document, in particular the restriction on A5 uses detailed on p 136.
2. However, the Trust considers that some of the proposals as they apply to Durham City centre and as further detailed in Appendices I and J¹ should be more strongly defined. In particular, as indicated in our response to Q 27, the Trust considers that the main centre boundary shown on page 135 of Appendix I should be extended to take in the existing commercial and retail uses in North Road between the A690 roundabout and the junctions with the station approach road and with Sutton Street, and should also extend along the eastern side of Sutton Street as far as its junction with the A690 at the railway viaduct, and also include the commercial uses on the opposite side of Sutton Street between Flass Street and the railway viaduct.
3. The Trust also considers that the “primary frontages” designation should extend as far as Elvet Bridge; along Claypath to the eastern edge of the delineated main centre boundary; and along North Road to the railway approach/Sutton Street junctions.
4. The Trust strongly supports the purpose of the Council’s proposals for uses within primary and secondary frontages, set out in subsection 3 beginning on page 135 and explained in more detail in paras 6.42-45. However, the wording of the first (and second) bullets on p 136 is defective, because the word “then” appears to be have used instead of “than”. The “plain English” description in para 6.44 makes the intention clear, and the Trust would expect the 50% threshold to be applied to the extended primary frontage area within Durham City Centre as proposed in our para 3 above.
5. As discussed in our response to Q27, the Council’s consultants have stressed the importance of improving the convenience shopping offer within the main centre boundary of Durham City. The Trust therefore considers that the wording in the last bullet point on page 134 (under the rubric “District Centres – Arnison Centre Durham City, Sherburn Road Durham City”) should be strengthened by the **bold** amendment shown below, to read:

“Additional high street comparison retail provision and **convenience food provision** within the District Centres will need to be carefully assessed to protect the vitality and viability of Durham City Centre.”
6. The Trust calls on the Council to amend its proposals as detailed above in order to give greater protection to the role of Durham City Centre within County Durham’s retail hierarchy.

1 Durham County Council, *Local plan preferred options: Appendices* (2012), appendices I and J.