

Matter 7 – Economic Development

Matter 7, Issue 2 – Whether the other economic development policies are justified, effective, consistent with national policy and positively prepared?

Q5. Is Strategic Policy 35: Town Centre Hierarchy and Sequential Approach sound?
c) is the threshold for retail impact assessment of 500 metres square set out in criterion 5 justified?

- 7.2.1 The recently adopted Crawley Borough Local Plan (CBLP), October 2024: [Crawley Borough Local Plan 2023 to 2040.pdf](#) sets a local threshold for retail impact assessment of 500 metres square for impacts on Crawley Town Centre. This was based on technical evidence and was considered in detail as part of the CBLP Examination. The Inspectors' Final Report, paragraph 212, page 60, concluded "*This lower threshold, compared with the national default threshold of 2,500 square metres, is based on sound research of centres with similar characteristics to Crawley and will not unreasonably restrict suitable development from taking place in out-of-centre locations within the borough. Accordingly, we find the threshold to be justified and consistent with national planning policy at NPPF paragraph 90 in terms of identifying an appropriate locally set threshold*": [Crawley Borough Local Plan Inspectors' final report September 2024.pdf](#)
- 7.2.2 On this basis, it is expected that any retail of this scale proposed at West of Ifield Strategic Site, should it be allocated through the Horsham District Local Plan, should also be required to undertake impact testing on Crawley Town Centre and nearby neighbourhood parades (for example, Bewbush, Ifield and Ifield West).
- 7.2.3 Impacts on Crawley Town Centre and Neighbourhood Centres is further picked up in CBC's Written Statements to Matter 2 and Matter 9.