

ANTRIM & NEWTOWNABBEY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2030

Draft Plan Strategy Response

Longwood Retail Park

Aberdeen Asset Management

September 2019



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Annexes

Annex 1 – Longwood Retail Park

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 We write to the Council on behalf of **Aberdeen Asset Management** in respect of the recently published Draft Plan Strategy (DPS) and as part of the wider Local Development Plan 2030 process. Our client has property interest in Antrim and Newtownabbey District and owns the Longwood Retail Park, Longwood Road Newtownabbey (see **Annex 1**).
- 1.2 This representation follows our previous representation to the Preferred Options Paper (POP) submitted to the Council in April 2017. The aforementioned representation specifically related to the potential adjustments to the Retail Hierarchy of Centres for Antrim and Newtownabbey and the Preferred Option put forward by the Council for the re-classification of said centres.
- 1.3 The purpose of this representation is to comment upon the proposed Retail Hierarchy that has been presented in the Draft Plan Strategy which sees the Abbey Centre (including Longwood Retail Park) categorised as a Large Town Centre and to express our clients support for same.

2.0 Subject Site - Longwood Retail Park

- 2.1 Longwood Retail Park forms part of a wider retail destination known as the Abbey Centre, the main shopping District Centre located within Newtownabbey, accessible from the A2 Shore Road and c.5miles north of Belfast City Centre. As identified within the Retail and Commercial Leisure Evidence Paper prepared by Nexus in support of the emerging LDP, the Abbey Centre attracts the greatest proportion of spending within the Borough of £272.1m.
- 2.2 The Retail Park is in a highly accessible location, courtesy of its location adjacent to Junction 2 of the M2 Motorway, with vehicular accesses from both Longwood Road and Mill Road as shown below at **TSA 1**. More locally, Longwood Retail Park is situated directly opposite Abbey Shopping Centre and Abbey Retail Park and is adjacent to a mix of other retailers within the wider vicinity such as The Door Store, Starplan, Funky Monkeys, Marks & Spencer and Lidl.



TSA 1 – Longwood Retail Park in context

- 2.3 Longwood Retail Park comprises approximately 191,000sqft of retail floorspace across 10 no. retail units. Existing long-established tenants of the Retail Park include National Retailers such as Costa Coffee, Homebase, Matalan and TK Maxx with a number of new retailers also recently investing in the Retail Park including Homesense and Hobbycraft and a pending application to facilitate Iceland.
- 2.4 The Retail Park forms an integral and important part of the overall Abbey Centre District Centre (MNY 20/01) role and function.

3.0 Preferred Options Paper (POP)

- 3.1 The Council put forward a four-tier classification and proposed the Abbey Centre District Centre as a "Tier 1" centre; a "Large Town Centre/District Centre" along with Antrim Town Centre as detailed below at **TSA 2 and TSA 3**.

| Tier | Classification | Role |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Large Town / District Centre | Provides (or has the potential to provide) a range of shops, businesses and community facilities to a significant hinterland which includes smaller neighbouring towns or many suburbs. |
| 2 | Town / District Centre | Provides (or has the potential to provide) a range of shops, businesses and community facilities to a hinterland which includes neighbouring villages or a few surrounding suburbs. |
| 3 | Local Centre / Village Centre | Provides (or has the potential to provide) a range of shops, businesses and community facilities to a village and surrounding hamlets or to a surrounding suburban community. |
| 4 | Neighbourhood Centre | Provides (or has the potential to provide) a range of shops and services to a surrounding community. |

TSA 2 – POP – Proposed Classification of Hierarchy of Centres

OPTION 2:

Retain and reclassify our current centres based upon our new classifications with Glengormley and Northcott as separate centres

| Tier | Classification | Location |
|------|---|--|
| 1 | Large Town Centre/ Large District Centre | Antrim Town Centre Abbey Centre |
| 2 | Town Centre/ District Centre | Ballyclare Town Centre Crumlin Town Centre Randalstown Town Centre Northcott District Centre Glengormley District Centre |
| 3 | Local Centre/ Village Centre | To be considered by new plan |
| 4 | Neighbourhood Centre | Greystone Antrim Parkhall Antrim Ballycraig Antrim |

TSA 3 – Option 2 from Antrim and Newtownabbey POP - LDP 2030

4.0 Draft Plan Strategy

- 4.1 Within the DPS, the Council has put forward a proposed Retail Hierarchy within Strategic Policy 2.12 *Town Centres and Retailing*. The Policy states that the Council will operate a Town Centre First Approach in considering the development of retail and other main town centre uses across the Borough which will be achieved through **applying the hierarchy of the Boroughs Retail Centres** as referred to at Table 4 of said policy. An extract of Table 4 has been provided at **TSA 4** for reference. We agree with the DPS approach of separating both the distinction between Town Centre and District Centre.

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Large Town Centres | Abbey Centre and Antrim |
| Town Centres | Ballyclare, Crumlin, Glengormley, and Randalstown |
| District Centres | Northcott and Whiteabbey Village |
| Local Centres | <p>Urban Metropolitan Newtownabbey Abbot's Cross, Ballyduff, Beverley Road, Carnmoney, Cloughfern, The Diamond (Rathcoole), Jennings Park, Kingspark/Kings Crescent, Mallusk, Mayfield, Merville Garden Village, Monkstown, Mossley West and Richmond.</p> <p>Antrim Greystone and Parkhall</p> <p>Rural Ballynure, Doagh, Parkgate, Templepatrick, and Toome</p> |

Table 4: Antrim and Newtownabbey Retail Hierarchy

TSA 4 – Retail Hierarchy for Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough

- 4.2 Nexus describe the Abbey Centre District Centre within their Retail Evidence Paper as having the largest convenience and comparison goods market shares, including two major foods stores and a very large hinterland population (106,811 persons) within a 10-minute drivetime. However, despite the large hinterland population within the catchment of the Abbey Centre, Metropolitan Newtownabbey does not have a functioning Town Centre, yet smaller centres such as Ballyclare, Glengormley and Antrim all benefit from a defined Town Centre and have significantly smaller populations within their 10-minute drivetime catchment.
- 4.3 Therefore we are delighted that the Draft Plan has elevated the classification of the Abbey Centre District Centre (which includes Longwood Retail Park) to a Tier 1 Large Town Centre, recognising The Abbey Centre for its strong retail goods offering and growing entertainment role. As one of the principal shopping destinations in Northern Ireland this re-classification will continue to contribute to the economic prosperity of the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough and perform an important function of meeting the needs of residents within the surrounding catchment.

- 4.4 We believe it is important to recognise how the role of each of the individual Retail Parks within the District Centre boundary have contributed to its reclassification, and the **significant role** they play in maintaining its economic prosperity, vitality and viability moving forward into 2030. This includes Longwood Retail Park.
- 4.5 We would note that the Evidence Paper for Retailing is based upon the **current Abbey Centre District Centre boundary** as set out within BMAP 2015 (designation **MNY 20/01**) and illustrated overleaf at **TSA 5**, and would agree that this should form (as a minimum) the basis of defining the Town Centre Boundary, at Local Plan Policies Stage.



TSA 5 –Abbey Centre District Centre (MNY 20/01)

- 4.6 In the spirit of consistent decision making and protecting the future vitality and viability of the Abbey Centre Town Centre we trust that this boundary (or greater) will be carried forward to The Local Policies Plan (LPP) once the Plan Strategy has been adopted.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This representation is submitted to Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council on behalf of **Aberdeen Asset Management** in response to the recently published Draft Plan Strategy.
- 5.2 To reiterate our comments above, we confirm our support for the new Retail Hierarchy dictated under Strategic Policy 2.12 that designates the Abbey Centre as a Large Town Centre within the proposed classification of centres and consider this to be a sound approach to development management throughout the Borough moving forward into 2030. Our support of the new Retail Hierarchy is based on the current boundary of the Abbey Centre District Centre (which includes our client's property at Longwood Retail Park) being carried forward to the Local Policies Plan once the Plan Strategy has been adopted.
- 5.3 We trust the above is of assistance to the Council and will positively inform the Local Development Plan 2030 process. We reserve the right to submit further representations as and when necessary throughout the Local Development Plan 2030 process on behalf of our client.

Annex 1 – Longwood Retail Park

