

APPENDIX 7a

Methodology for Assessing
Quantitative Retail Need/Capacity

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Step 1 Catchment Area Definition and Study Time Frame

Step 1A The catchment (or survey) area should be defined with regard to the study objective.

Step 1B The catchment should then be subdivided into zones (or sub-areas) to reflect the number and location of retail centres and the accessibility between them.

The number of zones will depend on the size of the sample for the household survey. Ideally a minimum of around 100 interviews should be carried out within each zone.

Zone boundaries are normally defined in terms of administrative boundaries or postal geography.

Step 1C An assessment will normally adopt the current year as its starting point or “base year”. The end year, or “forecast year”, will normally be determined by the end date of the Plan.

In preparing quantitative need studies it is normally helpful to also produce need estimates for selected intermediate years, since this will show how floorspace need (if any) changes or grows over time.

Step 1D A constant price base must be adopted for the quantitative need assessment. Thus all monetary figures are given in real values and discounted for the effects of price inflation.

Step 2 Analyse Consumer Demand

Step 2A Population estimates for each zone at the base year are required. Each of the zone populations must then be projected forwards to the forecast year(s).

Step 2B Estimates of retail expenditure per head are required for either the catchment area as a whole or ideally for each zone.

Estimates are also likely to be required for different categories of goods; the most common are: convenience goods and comparison goods.

All expenditure data providers produce estimates for user defined areas which reflect the socio-demographics and affluence of the localities.

It is essential that the expenditure per head estimates are adjusted to the correct price base (see Step 1D) and also that spending on special forms of trading is excluded (i.e. this is expenditure that does not take place in shops e.g. that through mail order, through vending machines and also over the internet).

Step 2C Projection of Expenditure Per Head Estimates Through to the Forecast Year(s)

National expenditure growth forecasts are published by a number of organisations (e.g. Experian).

Step 2D Total available retail expenditure (for each goods category) should be calculated for the survey area and the constituent zones at both the base year and the forecast year(s). Thus the “growth” in available expenditure can be identified.

Total available expenditure at any particular year will originate from two sources:- inside the survey area and from outside the survey area.

Within the survey area – generated expenditure is calculated by multiplying the resident population by the estimate of average spend per head. This calculation can also be undertaken for each zone.

Outside the survey area – it is likely that there will be an in-flow of retail expenditure from people living outside the survey area. This is likely to be particularly significant if the survey area contains higher order centres and/or a popular tourist centre. The main types of in-flow are as follows:-

- Long distance shopping trips – the amount of spending from this source can be determined from household surveys carried out in adjoining areas or should be estimated by reference to the best available sources.
- Workers – a large daily working population will generate retail expenditure. For major commuter areas the spending produced by workers who live outside the survey area should be estimated and included.
- Tourists – visitors from the UK and overseas may for certain locations be an important generator of retail expenditure. Using survey data where available the spending from this source must also be estimated and included.

Estimates must be made of the extent to which the scale of in-flow retail expenditure will change through to the forecast year(s) in real terms.

Step 3 Analyse Retail Supply

Step 3A The existing stock of retail floorspace in the Plan area must be determined by the main goods categories analysed at Step 2B. This is essential since it is virtually impossible to provide a robust estimate of future quantitative need if the current floorspace supply is unknown.

All retail floorspace must be included – in centre, edge of centre and out-of-centre.

If existing stock figures are unavailable, it will normally be necessary to undertake or commission a thorough retail audit of the current retail provision.

Comprehensive information on the quantity of the existing retail offer / floorspace stock will inform the assessment of whether the retail economy is currently trading at equilibrium or not (see Step 4A below).

Step 3B A household survey should be commissioned to establish the existing pattern of shopper behaviour and retail consumer expenditure flows within the Plan area and between the Plan area and adjoining areas.

This survey as a minimum should cover the whole of the Plan area. However, there are important benefits if the survey can be extended to cover other adjoining and nearby areas (i.e. it can then inform on the extent of in-flow expenditure from beyond the Plan area).

The most cost-effective form of household survey is by telephone. As stated at Step 1B, a minimum of 100 completed interviews per zone is recommended.

The survey should quantify shopper behaviour separately for the main goods categories.

Step 3C The household survey results can then be applied to the totals of available expenditure by zone (from Step 2D) in order to estimate the existing retail turnovers of centres and stores within the Plan area.

For centres which attract long distance shopping trips and/or which benefit from commuter and tourist expenditure (see Step 2D), allowances must be made for turnover contributions from these sources.

The actual centre and store turnovers derived from the household survey should, wherever possible, be cross-checked against actual turnover figures from other sources (e.g. the retailers themselves) where these are available.

The household survey will determine the actual levels of available retail expenditure retained by individual centres and the Plan area as a whole. These are the base year market shares and can be calculated for each main category of goods.

Step 3D A “benchmark” turnover for each of the main goods categories must be derived for the Plan area as a whole and for each centre. When compared to the actual turnovers calculated at Step 3C, this allows one to determine whether the existing floorspace is under or over-trading.

Benchmark turnovers are estimated from published data. If company average sales densities for leading retailers are used, these should be weighted up or down as appropriate to reflect local circumstances (e.g. the affluence of the area, the type and size of stores and the costs of the location to retailers).

Step 4 Retail Demand vs. Retail Supply in the Base Year

Step 4A It is necessary to test the adequacy of existing retail provision in the Plan area. If actual turnovers (from Step 3C) exceed the benchmark turnovers (from Step 3D) then it can be said that the current floorspace stock is over-trading, and that there is an existing need for additional floorspace. Conversely, if actual turnovers are less than the benchmark turnovers then there is an existing over-supply of floorspace. Lastly, if actual and benchmark turnovers are the same (or close) then the Plan area’s retail economy for that category of goods can be said to be in equilibrium.

The extent of the existing retail floorspace over or under-supply can be estimated by converting the existing turnover surplus or deficit into floorspace by applying an appropriate average sales density.

Step 5 Changes in Retail Demand and Retail Supply through to the Forecast Year(s)

Step 5A Step 2D estimated the total available retail expenditure within the Plan area at the forecast year(s) for each of the main goods categories. The base year market shares (from Step 3C) may then be applied in order to obtain estimates of the levels of retained available expenditure at the forecast year(s).

It should be considered whether the application of the base year market shares are appropriate at the forecast year(s) in relation to the Plan area as a whole and/or individual centres. If it is considered that expenditure outflow (or leakage) is too high, or a centre is not achieving its true retailing potential, then a case could be made for increasing the market share(s). Alternatively, if it is thought that the proportion of expenditure being retained is too high, then the market share(s) could be reduced.

In either situation, the adjustment of the market shares should be the result of an interactive process, which focuses on realistic expectations of trade retention within individual zones within the Plan area.

It should also be borne in mind that adjusting the market share of a centre will have direct implications for the market shares of other centres. Similarly, increasing the market share for the Plan area as a whole will mean adjoining areas will lose their share of available expenditure

Step 5B Step 3D estimated the benchmark retail turnovers generated within the Plan area in the base year for the main categories of goods. These turnovers must then be projected to the forecast (year(s)) by taking into account any expected improvements in store efficiency (i.e. sales densities).

Step 5C The monetary difference between the total potential retained expenditure at 5A and the forecast retail turnover at 5B gives a measure of the quantitative need for additional retail floorspace within the Plan area since the base year. Such floorspace need estimates will be inclusive of (any) retail commitments. If there is an expenditure surplus this is converted into a floorspace total by dividing through by an appropriate average sales density. Similarly, if there is an expenditure deficit, a floorspace over-supply can be calculated in the same way.

Step 5D To arrive at a final estimate of overall quantitative need the floorspace outputs from Step 5C must take into account (any) surplus or deficit of available expenditure generated at Step 4A due to (any) over/under-trading.