Retail Outlets Survey – Explanatory Note

Context

The Scottish Government requires us to take a town centres first approach to footfall generating development including retail, services and leisure uses. The overarching aim of the Government is to support our town centres as vibrant and active places.

Consequently, we need a basis for defining town centres, identifying supporting networks and making decisions on new development which would support this overarching aim. The Retail Outlets Survey (ROS) is our mechanism for collecting the information we need to do this and action plans are how we intend to implementing change.

The ROS is published biennially (every two years) as a series of summary tables about our town, commercial, local and neighbourhood centres as well as our stand-alone retails outlets. The information is displayed on a centre basis with stand-alone outlets shown together as a combined entity.

While the ROS was initially focused on retail it has more recently evolved to include most commercial uses in town centres. This makes straight comparison between years difficult as totals are not necessarily comparing like for like but the holistic approach allows us to better prepare our action plans.

The Retail Outlets Survey

Includes:

- Most commercial outlets in town centres
- All commercial outlets in commercial centres
- Most shops that are not in a designated centre (known as 'stand-alone').

Does not include:

- All Business/Office (Class 4) buildings
- All Industrial (Class 5 and 6) buildings
- All Commercial properties with a residential element i.e. hotels, hospitals, care homes (Class 7 and 8)
- Any Residential (Class 9) properties

The survey includes only <u>existing</u> floorspace. It does not, for example, include land where planning permission has been approved for retail development but where no building exists.

The 2013 Retail Outlets Survey Schedules

The Use Classes Order 1997 is used as an initial basis to classify the use of commercial outlets based on their operation at the time of the survey. This classification process does not necessarily reflect planning consent and it does not bestow any formal acceptance of unauthorised uses – it simply reflects our opinion of what the use is at the time.

The schedules are presented in terms of Occupied and Vacant properties and floorspace. Occupied floorspace is separated out into Convenience, Comparison, Service, Leisure and Recreation, Community and Other units and floorspace.

Convenience floorspace refers to a subset of Class 1 retailing that people would use on a regular basis. This would include shops that sell food and drink like supermarkets, newsagents, and corner shops.

Comparison floorspace refers to a subset of Class 1 retailing that people would use on a less regular basis than convenience and which people might 'shop around' different retailers before making a physical purchase. Clothes shops, department stores, and hardware stores could be described in this way. These types of shops tend to be clustered together in centres to allow people to compare offers between retailers.

Service floorspace refers to all three main types of unit. The first is the traditional Class 2 office use where the principle users are members of the public. This would include banks, estate agents, dentists etc.). The second includes the traditional Class 4 office use where the public are less likely to visit (i.e. corporate headquarters, call centres, administrative offices etc). The third includes Class 1 uses where services rather than physical goods are on offer – for example hairdressers, laundrettes, or dry cleaners.

Leisure and Recreation includes Class 3 uses like restaurants and cafes, class 11 uses like cinemas, swimming pools and bingo halls as well as sui generis uses like pubs and nightclubs.

Community uses is a relatively new introduction to the survey and is less well defined than the traditional definitions above. It is loosely related to Class 10 uses like nurseries, museums, places of worship, halls and libraries – i.e. non-residential institutions, and is intended to provide evidence of potential commercial floorspace especially where these uses have become vacant.

Other uses is also a relatively new addition and is intended to capture the residential institutions like care homes, residential schools, and colleges. While there are only a few examples of this they tend to have large floorplates and therefore could skew figures for smaller centres, if not individually identified.

Not Classified uses is a new addition to the survey which has been introduced as a mechanism to record other non-residential uses that are located in town centres such as factories, garages and workshops. It is not used in the published schedules.