

## APPENDIX A

### LOCAL CENTRES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME – EXPLANATION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

#### 1. Methodology - Criteria for evaluation

The methodology officers have used is based on evaluating the centres against the following criteria which was agreed at the July 2014 Community Services Committee meeting:

##### 1.1. Environmental quality audit / health check – this includes a physical analysis of the:

- context – location and surrounding area, other facilities nearby
- accessibility (ease of access on foot, cycle, public transport and by car, including car and cycle parking, location of bus stops)
- the types of shops and facilities (activity generators such as an anchor store, newsagent, post office, pub) and key community facilities (library, health centre, doctors surgeries, chemist for example); and
- the quality of the public realm (footways, public space, seating, lighting, street furniture)

##### 1.2. Local Plan Policies – this includes listing relevant policies such as:

- Supporting policies for Opportunity Areas, e.g. Mill Rd and Hills Rd Opportunity Areas, and how these are planned to strengthen local centres
- Proposal Sites in close proximity and how these are relevant to local centres

##### 1.3. Catchment area and population within 800m radius (10 minutes walking time). Officers have used accessibility standards for local facilities from the guide: **“Shaping Neighbourhoods: A Guide for Health, Sustainability and Vitality”** by Barton, Hugh; Grant, Marcus; Guise, Richard, Spon Press, 2003.

- 6000 persons is a generally used figure, according to this guide, as the base population threshold to support a local centre within a ten minutes walking time. Actual walking distances have been used, taking into account barriers to movement such as rivers, urban blocks, railway lines and circuitous routes in order to provide increased accuracy in calculating the walkability of the neighbourhood. Officers reviewed the current population figures as well as the potential uplift from allocation sites to establish whether there already exists a “critical mass” to support a local centre and make it viable.

##### 1.4 Potential for / known investment – this includes investment that has a direct impact on the local centres, such as:

- Known Public investment e.g. highway, public realm and environmental improvements
- Known Private investment
- Potential investment e.g. City Deal initiative

Added value and potential for business growth – a commentary is provided on the potential for added value in undertaking improvements to local centres through consideration of social, commercial and environmental aspects (along with information gathered from discussion with others including Property Services and the Environmental Projects Team). These criteria will not form part of the ranking system and will be used as background information only.

## 2. Scoring/Ranking approach

Having established and agreed criteria for evaluation, officers then developed an objective ranking approach, giving a numerical value from 1 to 3 for each of the criterion. The rationale for the ranking system is explained below:

2.1 Environmental quality audit / health-check – the ranking is based on **1 representing an existing good level of environmental quality and 3 as a poor level of environmental quality**. The implication is that a low ranking local centre has less need of improvement (and so scores a lower number of points).

2.2 Local Plan Policies relevant to local centres:

- Supporting policies for Opportunity Areas – Centres which do not relate to any Opportunity Area will rank highest at 3 points. Alternately they will be scored with 2 points if adjacent to an Opportunity area, while centres within the Opportunity area will rank the lowest 1. This is because it is assumed that centres within existing Opportunity Areas are likely to be supported by other programmes and/or funding to support their regeneration e.g. City Deal, developer contributions, corridor transport payment, etc..
- Proposal Sites as taken from the Draft Local Plan 2014, Appendix B “Proposals Schedule” - Centres adjacent to proposal sites will rank highest at 3 points; they will be scored with 2 points if Proposal sites are near to local centres; and will score lowest at 1 point where there is no proposal site in close proximity. The rationale for this scoring is that future proposals sites will potentially provide further support and investment to local centres through additional population, activity and potential for developer contributions in the immediate area, further enhancing any investment made through the Local Centres Improvement Program.
- The scores from these two parts (supporting policy and proposals sites) are then added together to reach one score for this criterion. If there is a strong likelihood that centres will be the subject of investment via City Deal or are located in parts of the city where significant new development is planned (and so will likely benefit from significant new foot fall) then they have scored no points in relation to supporting policies.

2.3 Catchment area and 6000 population threshold – Centres with a negative threshold will score only 1 point; up to 1000 persons above this threshold will score 2 points; and above 1000 persons will score 3 points.

2.4 Potential for / known investment (added value) – this includes investment that has a direct impact on the local centres. This criteria is potentially very subjective and subject to interpretation, so a detailed score is not provided. Rather, a commentary is given and referred to in the summary for each centre.

2.5 Finally, all scores are then placed in a “low” (6 points), “medium” (7-8 points) and “high” (9 or more points) category for ease of the final assessment and selection. It is not considered beneficial to select centres for inclusion in the program on the basis of absolute numbers given in the scoring. Rather, a low-medium-high approach allows scope for qualitative assessment and relative comparison of a “basket” of highly ranked centres.