

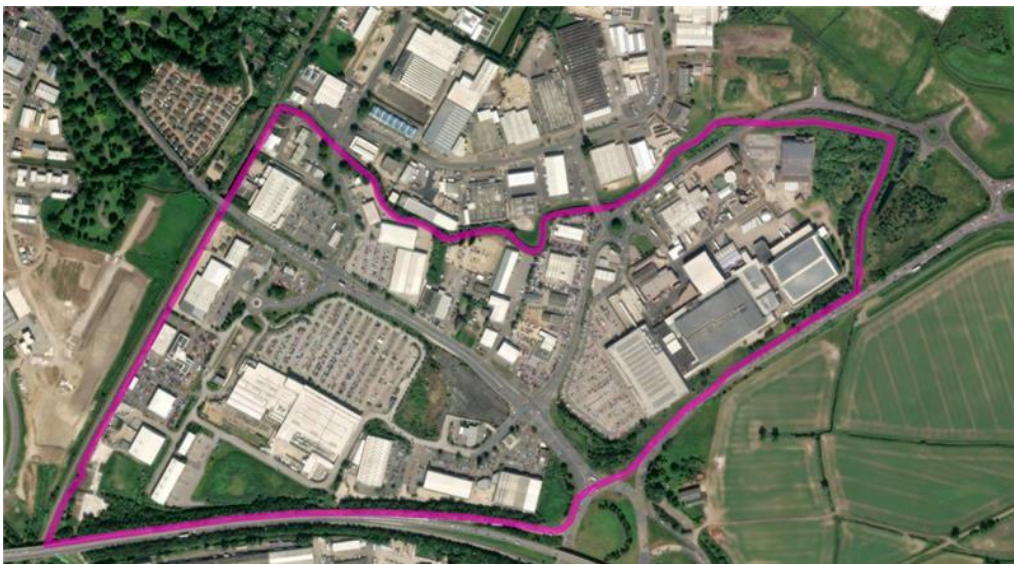


Local Plan (2021-2040)

Policy LP08: Retail Development – Lower Retail Sequential Test Requirement for the Hardwick Area of King's Lynn

Explanatory Note

July 2025



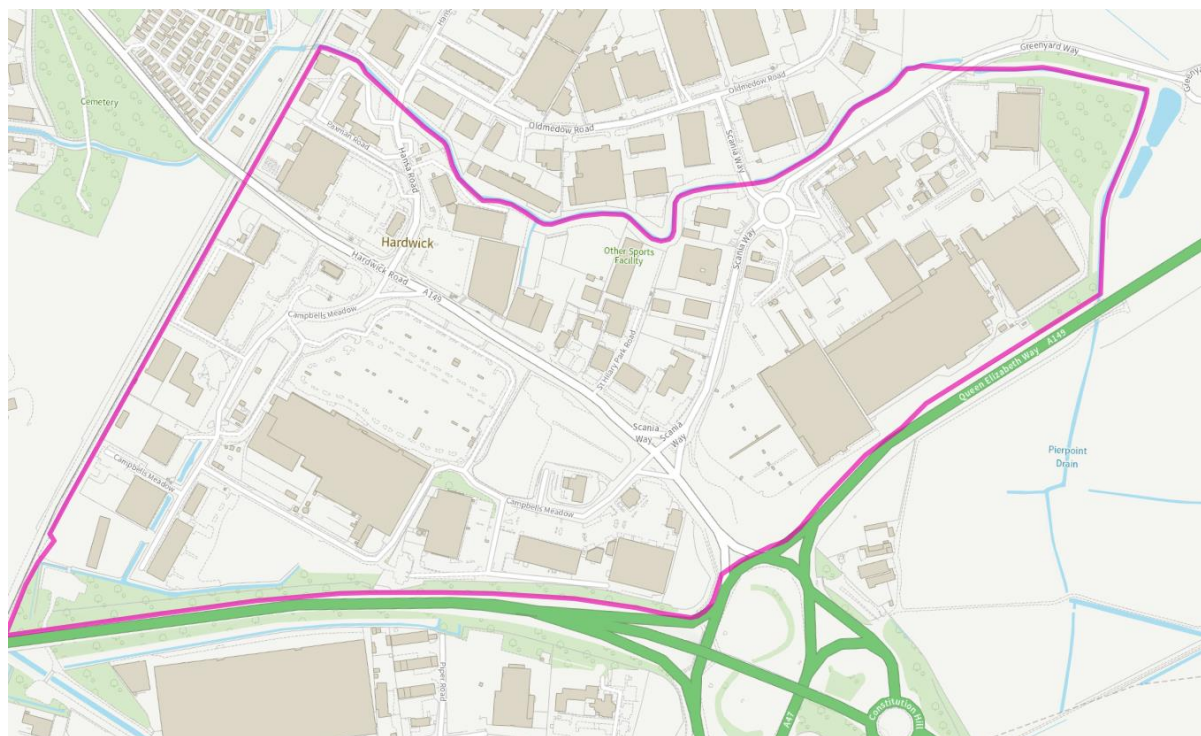


1. Hardwick Area, King's Lynn

- 1.1 Located to the East of the town, this part of King's Lynn is characterised by medium to large scale mixed use employment units with an increasing volume of out-of-town retail development. However, the [Local Plan](#) does not define this area for any particular land use.
- 1.2 The Borough's town centres are facing strong competition from other locations such as out of town retail parks – like Hardwick, which, due to their continued expansion could potentially harm the town centre further.
- 1.3 Local Plan Policy LP08 – Retail Development is designed to manage the impact of new out-of-town retail development in terms of its scale and location through a sequential test.
- 1.4 The purpose of a sequential test is to show that sites within sequentially preferable locations have been considered before less preferable edge of centre and out of centre sites.
- 1.5 The sequential test will only be passed if the evidence submitted shows that:
 - there are no sites available (now or within a reasonable timescale) within sequentially preferable locations; or
 - any available units within such locations would be unsuitable and/or unviable.
- 1.6 In order to ensure existing centres remain a focus for retail, Local Planning Authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses in line with the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). The NPPF requires a sequential test to be undertaken alongside planning applications for retail provision and changes of use to retail outside of a defined town centre boundary. Town Centre boundaries for King's Lynn and West Norfolk can be viewed on the [Policies Map](#).
- 1.7 A sequential test is not applicable to all retail applications, the NPPF sets a default floorspace threshold for retail applications of 2,500m² of gross floorspace or above. This is reflected in Part 3 of Policy LP08 and applies to most of the Borough.
- 1.8 However, paragraph 94 of the NPPF also enables Local Authorities to define a different locally set floorspace threshold where it is supported by appropriate evidence.
- 1.9 Due to the increased level of out-of-town retail development at Hardwick and its potential harm to King's Lynn Town Centre, the Council justified a lower floorspace threshold for the Hardwick area of King's Lynn.



1.10 The lower floorspace threshold for retail developments is set at 500m² or more and only applies to an area, as defined on the [Policies Map](#) as the 'Hardwick Retail Area'.



1.11 This defined area on the Policies Map is merely to illustrate the geographical extent to where the sequential test for the lower floorspace threshold of 500m² would apply and is not a retail designation or allocation, which restricts a particular land use.

1.12 These thresholds reflect local evidence, the size and function of the existing centres and will help protect them from medium and large out of centre food stores and other shops which could have significant impacts. The threshold should not only apply to new floorspace, but also to changes of use and variations of planning condition to remove or amend restrictions on how units operate in practice. In considering proposals for variations of condition, the threshold should apply to the whole of the unit in question, rather than just the quantity of floorspace subject to the condition. The sequential test approach does not need to be applied to applications for small scale rural offices or other small scale rural development.

1.13 The Council would always encourage any perspective developer to use the Council's pre-application planning service for early discussion on future proposals within this area.