

# Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 - 2031

## Retail Monitoring Report – 2021 / 2022 Position Statement

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 On an annual basis the City Council undertakes a series of monitoring surveys where they assess the changes in retailing and town centre floorspace within the district. This position statement provides some of the key information on changes to retail use and the creation / loss of retail floorspace including:

- Proposals granted for planning permission between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022;
- The number of new retail developments completed between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022; and
- Future development pressures for town centres and retailing within Lancaster District.

1.2 This monitoring report can be read in conjunction with previous position statements which have been prepared to inform our interim understanding of changes to retail floorspace. Further information on retail patterns can also be found within the City Council's Retail Development Strategy and Town Centre Health Checks which were published in 2014 and the District Wide Retail Review published in 2015. Both documents are available on the Council's website at [www.lancaster.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planningpolicy). The council will seek to implement an update to its retail evidence at the point of a full review to the Local Plan.

### **2. Planning Applications Permitted**

2.1 In terms of planning applications received, there have been few major planning applications made for retailing purposes in the 2021-2022 period. This continues to reflect a wider national trend in the economy which has seen significant impacts arising from the COVID-19 which has further accelerated spending habits away from high-street retailing towards online sales.

2.2 Only one application has been permission which could see any significant lift in retailing which forms part of the wider scheme for the Eden North project. Should the permission be realised then it has the potential for the delivery of up to **1,265sqm** of retail space as part of the newly proposed visitor centre for the attraction.

2.3 It is worth noting the significance of Eden North as a project that, if delivered, will have significant implications for Morecambe in terms of the level of footfall that it may create for the town. The economic consequences of this may have significant positives for investment and regeneration of the town centre areas, providing opportunities for further retailing and leisure uses which are connected to the visitor economy.

2.4 Two further applications are currently pending a decision which, should they be granted, secure further retailing spaces in the Lancaster area. Firstly, a new local centre is proposed as part of the North Lancaster Strategic Site, which is a strategic growth area which should deliver in the region of 700 new homes. The new local centre has been proposed as part of the first phase of this development and could generate in the region of 600sqm of new retailing space to the north of the city. Secondly, there is permission for a new Aldi Store to be created to the south of the City at Lawsons Bridge, Scotforth Road. This permission relates to an earlier approved permission for a Booths foodstore in 2010, this application seeks to provide a new design and layout for a store on this site, potentially creating in the region of 1,837sqm of new convenience retail space.

2.5 A further application remains pending for a new holiday village in Ellel, to the south of the district. Whilst the primary focus of this scheme relates to the provision of holiday accommodation it also includes a significant level of out-of-town retail in the form of a food / market hall. If granted permission this proposal could generate 8,500sqm of out-of-town retail space.

2.6 In terms of the loss of retail floorspace, as with last year the levels of floorspace lost to non-retail uses with the district's centres remains relatively low, despite the challenging economic climate and the longer term trends which has seen retail spaces in centre contracting. Whilst two significant applications which would have resulted in significant losses in Lancaster have been refused, only one has been granted permission which, if implemented, would lead to the loss of **166sqm** at 50-52 Penny Street, Lancaster.

App Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Change
21/01113/FUL	Central Promenade Regeneration Site, Marine Road Central, Morecambe	Demolition of existing buildings and proposed construction of major mixed use development in association with the Eden Project including Outdoor Arena, Public Realm and associated infrastructure.	1,265sqm

**Table 1:** Permission Granted for further new Retail Floorspace 2021 – 2021 (applications over 60sqm only) (Source: Lancaster City Council September 2022)

App Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Change
21/01511/FUL	50-52 Penny Street, Lancaster	Change of use of retail storage (Class E) on the first attic floor into 2-bed and 2 1-bed flats and erection of a single storey extension.	166sqm

**Table 2:** Permission Granted for the loss of Retail Floorspace 2021 – 2022 (applications over 60sqm only) (Source: Lancaster City Council April 2022)

### 3. Development Completions

3.1 There have been a low level of applications which have been completed over the 2021-2022 period involving the creation or loss of retail floorspace. In terms of retail completions which would create new floorspace, two applications have been completed which include the creation of **456sqm** of floorspace with the Cowan Bridge Industrial Estate (Application Reference: 20/01002/FUL) and a further **234sqm** in Caton Road, Lancaster (Application Reference: 20/00374/CU). Both these permissions have conversely resulted in the loss of identified employment space.

3.2 One permission has been completed which has resulted in the loss of retail space, this has been at 50-52 Penny Street in Central Lancaster (Application Reference: 21/01511/FUL) which has seen a loss of 166sqm of retail space.

App. Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Change
20/01002/FUL	Unit 1 Cowan Bridge Estate, Long Level, Cowan Bridge	Change of use of part of a industrial building (B1, B2, B8) to furniture retail warehouse (Sui Generis).	456sqm
20/00374/FUL	Lancaster Search & Rescue, Caton Road, Lancaster	Change of use of part of office (B1) to mixed use unit comprising retail (A1), storage (B8) and training centre (D1).	234sqm
21/01511/FUL	50-52 Penny Street, Lancaster	Change of use of retail storage (Class E) on first and attic floors into 2-bed flat and 2 1-bed flats and erection of a storey extension.	166sqm

**Table 3:** Retail completions recorded within Lancaster District 2021 – 2022 (Source: Lancaster City Council August 2022)

#### 4. Future Development Pressures

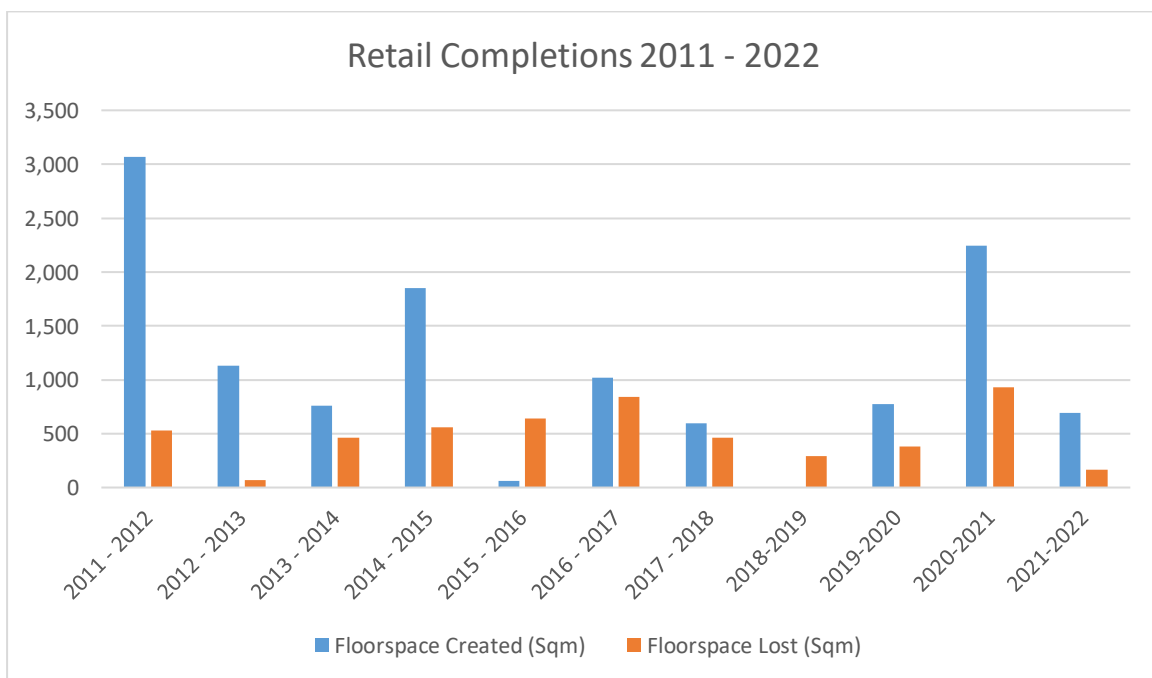
- 4.1 As highlighted in section 1, the high street continues to go through unprecedented challenges in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the economic volatility which has changed consumer spending patterns and reduced the levels of spending available. In the context of such challenges the council will continue to support and diversity opportunities within its town centres to contribute towards healthy and vibrant places which perform a key role in the community and the provision of key services. The Local Plan has sought to protect a hierarchy of retail centres in the district and has sought to promote the importance, in terms of role and function, in providing services to local residents, businesses and visitors to the district.
- 4.2 The council adopted their new Local Plan in July 2020 which has identified land to meet the future development needs of the district through to 2031. The Plan also sets out a series of generic planning policies which will be applicable to all types of development across the district.
- 4.3 Upon the adoption of the Local Plan, the council committed to the immediate partial review of the Plan to reflect the challenges around the Climate Emergency and the declaration made in January 2019. The purpose of the review is to strengthen its approach to addressing the Climate Emergency, both in terms of adaptation to and mitigation of.
- 4.4 The council also continue to work on a number of project which could influence economic growth in the district, this includes the creation of a new garden village in South Lancaster, the regeneration of the Canal Quarter area in Central Lancaster for a range of residential, retail, leisure and commercial uses and the Eden north project in Central Morecambe which will have positive benefits for the town.
- 4.5 It is critical that planning policy seeks to response to an extremely challenging and changeable retail market and seek to provide opportunities to make sure that the district centres have opportunity to diversify and evolve and the demands for shopping and the future roles of the High street change, particularly in a post-COVID-19 environment. The council have identified how such will be achieved in the Local Plan, promoting growth in Lancaster City Centre and at the Garden Village to ensure that local services are met in a sustainable manner.
- 4.6 There remains a low level of completion in the district for retailing, as highlighted in Section 3 of this Statement, and there has been a significant reduction in the number of valid and implementable permissions within the pipeline. There are a number of applications which are pending which, if implemented, would boost the levels of new floorspace which could be created in the Lancaster area. The pipeline is set out in Table 4 which highlights the low number of proposals.

App. Reference	Site	Description	Floorspace Change
20/01010/FUL	Land off Oakwood Way, Carnforth Business Park, Carnforth	Erection of a Members Retail Club with associated drainage, parking, access and landscaping.	300sqm
20/01145/FUL	Lune Industrial Estate, New Quay Road, Lancaster	Partial Demolition of industrial estate including the erection of new buildings and the conversion of existing buildings to create 15 industrial block, erection of an amenity block containing nursery, café and retail unit.	844sqm

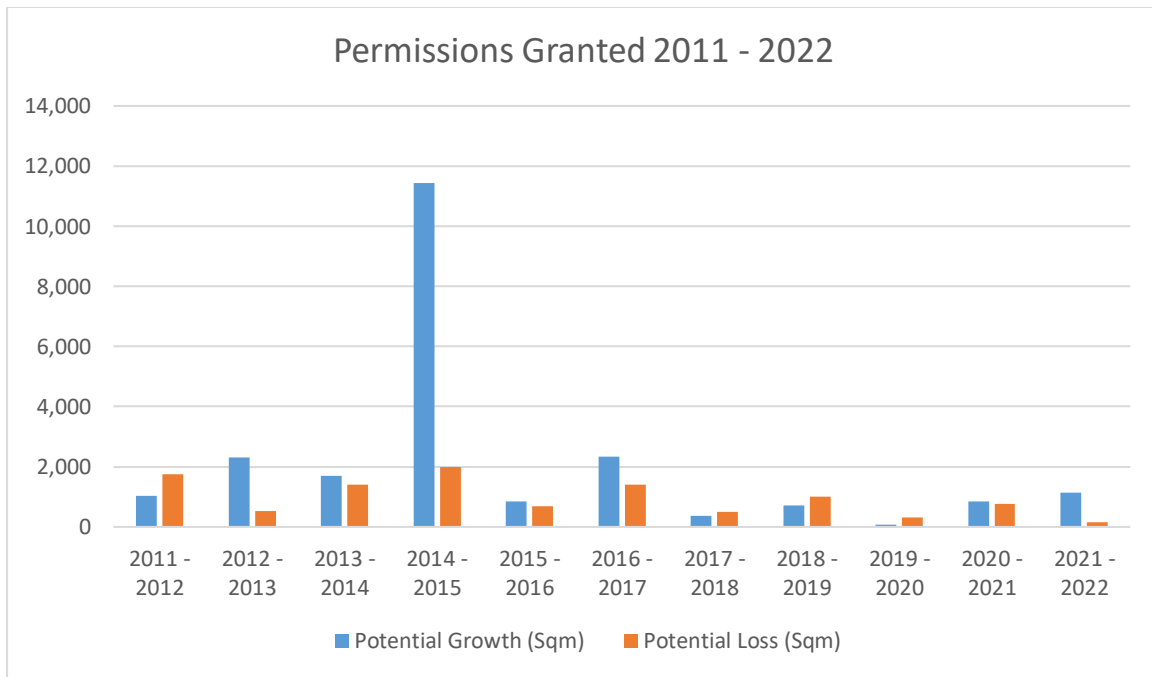
**Table 4:** Major retail Proposals which remain in the pipeline 2021 -2022 (Source: Lancaster City Council September 2022)

## 5. Development Trends

- 5.1 Figure 1 shows that in terms of retail completions between 2011 and 2022 there has been a significant change in the delivery of retail floorspace. The greatest levels of growth took place through the 2011 – 2012 period where significant expansions to convenience stores took place at Sainsbury’s (Cable Street, Lancaster) and Asda (Ovangle Road) boosted figures. This growth was also supplemented by the re-configuration of the St Nicholas Arcade in Lancaster City Centre.
- 5.2 Since that period of retail growth, the creation of new retail floorspace has been limited through the 2012 – 2014 period with around 1,000sqm of floorspace generated each year. However, in 2018-2019 monitoring period that figure dropped to 0 with no registered growth in retail floorspace. Completions increased in 2020 - 2021 how this is focused around the completion of units at the Luneside East Regeneration Site, whilst this unit is now complete it is yet to be occupied.
- 5.3 With regard to planning permission granted between 2021-2022 the levels of retail development granted permission have return to a normal levels with 1,144sqm of new floorspace granted permission and 166sqm of lost floorspace to alternative uses.



**Figure 1:** Chart to show the level of Completions involving Retail between 2011 and 2019 (Source: Lancaster City Council September 2022)



**Figure 2:** Chart to show the levels of permissions granted within Lancaster District involving Retail between 2011 and 2019  
 (Source: Lancaster City Council September 2022)