New Mills Town Centre Health Check – March 2012

Diversity of Uses (March 2012)			
	Number of Units	**Proportion**	**National Average (GOAD December 2011)**
Convenience	8	8.79%	8.75%
Comparison	23	25.3%	41.42%
Vacant	9	9.89%	13.60%
Service/Other	51	56.04%	35.08%
TOTAL	**91**		

Type of Centre	New Mills is designated as a 'Town Centre' in Policy TC1 in the High Peak Local Plan (and saved in Policy 27 of the Saved Local Plan Policies).
Description of Centre	New Mills is a linear centre running north south. It is located approximately 8 miles south-east of Stockport and 15 miles from Manchester. The majority of the primary shopping frontage is located along Market Street. This is supported by Union Road to the south which offers some degree of retail units but is dominated service uses. There is a local needs foodstore (710sqm gross) located within the centre on Torr Top Street.
Diversity of Uses	Market Street, to the north, comprises of predominantly convenience and comparison units with a number of restaurants, takeaways and three public houses. Union Road, to the south, provides fewer units but there is a stronger diversity of uses. Union Road offers a number of financial service providers as well as a dental surgery, community centre and a health centre. There are also office units and dwellings, the latter being primarily located above ground floor premises.
Floorspace in edge of centre and out of centre locations	A medium sized Co-op foodstore (1,115sqm gross) is situated approximately 210m south east of the town centre.
Potential for growth or change	There is limited potential for growth due to the scale and linear nature of the centre. Two vacant units on Union Street (410 sqm) provide some opportunity to attract new occupiers, but would not accommodate the size of units being proposed in this application.
Retailer Representation and Intentions to Change	New Mills is primarily dominated by individual retailers although there are a number of exceptions such as Sainsbury's Local and Bargain Booze.

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Vacancies	9 vacant units were found in New Mills, showing a reduction in vacancy rate since the last survey in October 2010. This represents a vacancy rate of 9.89%, lower than the UK average (13.60%). Vacancies are focused to the south on Union Road with a few interspersed on Market Street. The vacancy rate in terms of floorspace is 9.65%, again lower than the national average of 11.85%. Union Road houses the larger proportion of the vacant units both in terms of unit numbers and floorspace.
Pedestrian Flows	Whilst the survey was carried out a 10am, observations still showed a moderate level of pedestrian flows both along Market Street and to the south on Union Road. Fewer people were found towards both the northern and southern extremities.
Accessibility	In terms of accessibility, New Mills is served by two train stations, New Mills Central Rail Station to the west and New Mills Newtown Rail Station to the south west. The town centre has good links to the existing road network, particularly the A6. The town centre also benefits from regular bus services and a good network of pavements for pedestrian movement. There is a reasonably sized car park to the east of the town centre supported by additional car parks surrounding such as the Sainsburys Local car park.
Town Centre Environmental Quality	The town centre lies within a designated conservation area and occupies a unique setting above the Torrs, a gorge formed by the Rivers Goyt and Sett. The building styles in the centre add to the character of the town as a whole. These traditional frontages, added to the presence of the Torrs and former mill buildings, provide the town with an attractive setting. Surfaces and shop units are fairly well maintained towards the north on Market Street, but further south on Union Road, where there are a number of vacant units, property maintenance is markedly lower. Street furniture such as benches and bins are located towards at the junction of the two streets, there the Pride of the Peaks public house provides a meeting point.
Conclusions of Vitality and Viability	New Mills appears to be in very good health, with reduced vacancy rates, a good environmental quality and a high level of independent shops. The main road through New Mills brings a degree of passing trade which is supported by the towns ease of access via public transport. The Sainsbury's Local located in the town centre and the larger Co-op on the edge of centre serve the local community.

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