

## Policy RET2 Retail Impact Assessment

All applications, including extensions for retail development and town centre uses, above the thresholds identified below, must be accompanied by a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) where the proposal is located outside ~~the~~ town centre ~~or small town centre~~ boundaries.

- Above 750sq. m gross external area outside Ballymena and Larne town centres boundaries.
- Above 500sq. m gross external area outside Carrickfergus town centre and small towns boundaries.

~~In the case of small towns, an assessment of retail impact is required in relation to the relevant main any town centre within its catchment area, regardless of its position in the retail hierarchy.~~

Outside town centres, ~~and small town centre boundaries~~ but within the towns settlement limit, permission may be granted for a small scale convenience shop which does not exceed 100sq.m gross external area, where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) it meets a defined local need which cannot be met within an existing centre; and
- b) it will not adversely affect the vitality and viability of existing centres within its catchment.

The Retail Impact Assessment should provide a proportionate response to the proposal being sought and should incorporate an assessment of need, impact and the sequential approach.

Where proposals are considered to cause significant adverse impacts on any of the relevant criteria, or where in balancing overall impacts on each of the relevant criteria, the proposal is judged to be harmful, then it should be refused.

**7.2.19** As the average unit size in Ballymena and Larne town centres in 2018 was 263sq. m and 202sq. m respectively, the proposed RIA threshold of 750sq. m gross external area is deemed to be appropriate and in keeping with the existing scale of retail development in these towns. The average unit size in Carrickfergus in 2018 was 187sq. m so the proposed RIA threshold of 500sq. m gross external area is deemed appropriate. A Retail Impact Assessment is required where a proposed extension would result in the overall development exceeding the relevant thresholds above. ~~Where an applicant is required to undertake a Retail Impact Assessment for a proposal which is outside a small town centre boundary, then the assessment must consider the retail impact on any centre within its catchment.~~