

# Rotherham Town Centre: Quarterly Vacancy Survey

## January 2023

The Rotherham Local Plan Sites and Policies document defines Rotherham town centre boundary and Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages. The latest survey has been carried out on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023, for the October to December 2022 quarter. Appendix 1 sets out the principles on which monitoring data has been gathered.

|                                    |                                   | Jan 2023 |      | Summary   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|------|---|
|                                    |                                   | No./sqm  | %    |   |
| <b>Whole town centre</b>           | Total Units                       | 275      | -    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are <b>275 units</b>, amounting to <b>58,752 sqm</b>.</li> <li>There are <b>73 vacant units (14,568 sqm)</b>, which amount to <b>26.5% of total units or 24.8% of total floorspace</b>.</li> </ul>                           |
|                                    | Total Units Vacant                | 73       | 26.5 |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace (sqm)            | 58,752   | -    |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace Vacant (sqm)     | 14,568   | 24.8 |   |
|                                    | Total Units Demolished            | -        | -    |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace Demolished (sqm) | -        | -    |   |
|                                    | Derelict                          | 7        |      |   |
| <b>Primary shopping frontage</b>   | Total Units                       | 131      | -    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are <b>131 units</b>, amounting to <b>35,437 sqm</b>.</li> <li>There are <b>36 vacant units (6,868 sqm)</b>, which amount to <b>27.5% of units or 19.4% of floorspace within the Primary Shopping Frontage</b>.</li> </ul>   |
|                                    | Total Units Vacant                | 36       | 27.5 |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace (sqm)            | 35,437   | -    |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace Vacant (sqm)     | 6,868    | 19.4 |   |
|                                    | Total Units Demolished            | -        | -    |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace Demolished (sqm) | -        | -    |   |
| <b>Secondary shopping frontage</b> | Total Units                       | 102      | -    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are <b>102 units</b>, amounting to <b>14,311 sqm</b>.</li> <li>There are <b>22 vacant units (3,333 sqm)</b>, which amount to <b>21.6% of units or 23.3% of floorspace within the Secondary Shopping Frontage</b>.</li> </ul> |
|                                    | Total Units Vacant                | 22       | 21.6 |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace (sqm)            | 14,311   | -    |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace Vacant (sqm)     | 3,333    | 23.3 |   |
|                                    | Total Units Demolished            | -        | -    |   |
|                                    | Total Floorspace Demolished (sqm) | -        | -    |   |

The latest vacancy figure has decreased from the last quarter (July to September 2022, reported in October 2022), from 27.3% to **26.5%** of units in Town Centre (the vacant floorspace has reduced from 28% to **24.8%**). The vacancy rate remains significantly above the average vacancy rate on High Streets nationally (13.8% in Q4) and regionally (15% in Q4)<sup>1</sup> as both have fallen for the 5<sup>th</sup> quarter in a row.

In this quarter (October - December 2022):

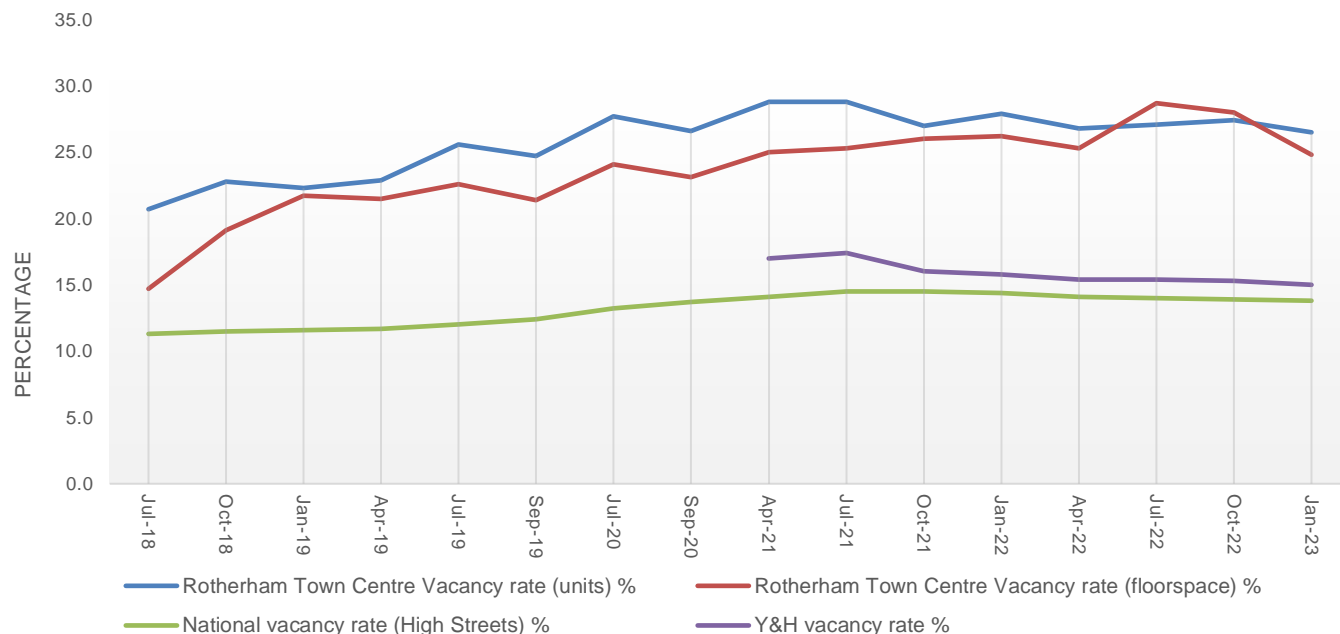
- The **Old Town Hall**, recently changed ownership, and welcomes 8 new businesses occupying the units, including shops, dance studio and tattoo parlour.
- **Megga Bargain Foods** now occupies 5-9 All Saints Square (formerly Scrivens optician, 245 sqm)
- The former Fitzwilliam & Hughes café at Imperial Building has now been changed to **The Ministry** café.
- Work is currently underway at **40 Bridgegate** to split its storage area into a new office unit (94 sqm) adjacent to Malcolm Foy & Co (2 Upper Millgate).
- Planning permission has been granted in November for the redevelopment of **Rotherham Markets** including new community hub building, library building and public realm improvements.
- As part of the town centre Cultural & Leisure Quarter regeneration project, demolition of the former Wilkinson store (**Wilko**, 1299 sqm) at 4 Corporation Street is due to commence in April 2023.
- A planning application has been submitted for the formation of new public realm and open space at **Corporation Street** as part of the town centre Cultural & Leisure Quarter regeneration project.
- A planning application has been submitted for the demolition of the derelict buildings and redevelopment at **3-7 Corporation Street**.

<sup>1</sup> The national vacancy rate analyses the top 650 town centres across England, Wales and Scotland. <https://www.localdatacompany.com/blog/press-release-fewer-vacant-stores-by-end-of-2022>

- **33a and 35-37 Bridgegate** (formerly The Rhinoceros public house) are now identified as derelict in the survey as they are not viable to be re-occupied due to the condition of the buildings due to fire damage.

It is also worth noting that the **Howard Building** at Howard Street has been vacant for many years and the floorspace counted in the survey is unlikely to be occupied for retail purposes without redeveloping the rest of the building. Part of the building was last used for office purposes and planning permission was granted in 2014 for residential use, which has never been implemented and has now lapsed (RB2014/1499).

### Vacancy Trend (July 2018 – January 2023)



### Town Centre Uses Distribution

The table below summarises the main uses within the Rotherham Town Centre and the Primary Shopping Frontages. The percentage represents each use class among the units that are in active use.

| Use *                                   | Oct 2022     |             |                  |             | Jan 2023     |             |                  |             |
|---|--------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|
|   | No. of units | %           | Primary Frontage | %           | No. of units | %           | Primary Frontage | %           |
| <b>Class E (total)</b>                  | <b>150</b>   | <b>54.2</b> | <b>82</b>        | <b>62.6</b> | <b>149</b>   | <b>54.2</b> | <b>79</b>        | <b>60.3</b> |
| (a) Shop                                | 105          | 70.0        | 64               | 78.0        | 108          | 72.5        | 63               | 79.7        |
| (b) Café or restaurant                  | 22           | 14.7        | 4                | 4.9         | 19           | 12.8        | 3                | 3.8         |
| (c) Financial and professional services | 18           | 12.0        | 11               | 13.4        | 18           | 12.1        | 11               | 13.9        |
| (d) Indoor sports and recreation        | 1            | 0.7         | 0                | 0.0         | 1            | 0.7         | 0                | 0           |
| (e) Medical services                    | 3            | 2.0         | 3                | 3.7         | 2            | 1.3         | 2                | 2.5         |
| (f) Creche / Daycare                    | 1            | 0.7         | 0                | 0.0         | 1            | 0.7         | 0                | 0           |
| <b>Sui Generis+ (total)</b>             | <b>43</b>    | <b>15.5</b> | <b>14</b>        | <b>10.7</b> | <b>44</b>    | <b>16.0</b> | <b>14</b>        | <b>10.7</b> |
| Drinking Establishment                  | 8            | 18.6        | 1                | 7.1         | 8            | 18.2        | 1                | 7.1         |
| Hot Food Takeaway                       | 10           | 23.3        | 3                | 21.4        | 10           | 22.7        | 3                | 21.4        |
| Betting Office                          | 6            | 14.0        | 4                | 28.6        | 6            | 13.6        | 4                | 28.6        |
| Others                                  | 19           | 44.2        | 6                | 42.9        | 20           | 45.5        | 6                | 42.9        |
| <b>F1 (Education/ Institution)</b>      | <b>3</b>     | <b>1.1</b>  | <b>1</b>         | <b>0.8</b>  | <b>3</b>     | <b>1.1</b>  | <b>1</b>         | <b>0.8</b>  |
| <b>F2 (Community use)</b>               | <b>2</b>     | <b>0.7</b>  | <b>1</b>         | <b>0.8</b>  | <b>2</b>     | <b>0.7</b>  | <b>1</b>         | <b>0.8</b>  |
| <b>C3 (Residential)</b>                 | <b>3</b>     | <b>1.1</b>  | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>    | <b>3</b>     | <b>1.1</b>  | <b>0</b>         | <b>0</b>    |

\* See Appendix 1 for a summary of Use Classes.

+ Uses which do not fall within a specific use class

## Redevelopment and Demolition

There were no demolitions or redevelopment, that removed units from the supply, taking place in this quarter. Planning permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of Rotherham Markets, the vacant Eastwood Lane units are added to 'Units to be redeveloped'. The former Wilko building is due to be demolished therefore a unit count is added to 'Units to be demolished'.

|   | Jan-22 | Apr-22 | Jul-22 | Oct-22 | Jan-23 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Units Demolished                                    | -      | -      | 2      | -      | -      |
| Units to be Redeveloped**                           | 15     | 15     | 15     | 15     | 21     |
| Units to be Refurbished                             | 5      | 5      | 3      | 3      | 4      |
| Units to be Demolished                              | 2      | 2      | -      | -      | 1      |
| Eastwood Lane Units to be demolished or refurbished | 6      | 6      | 6      | 6      | -      |

\*\*The units to be redeveloped include those that are currently demolished or vacant that are earmarked for redevelopment.

## Indoor market survey by RIDO (Jan 2023)

Between October – December 2022, four new non-food commodities have moved into the indoor market on the lower ground floor.

|               |                      | Lower Ground Floor | Upper Ground Floor | Total Units |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Indoor market | Non-food Commodities | 41                 | 18                 | 59          |
|               | Fresh Food           | 6                  | 2                  | 8           |
|               | Cooked Food          | 2                  | 1                  | 3           |
|               | Vacant               | 10                 | -                  | 10          |
|               | Total Units          | 59                 | 21                 | 80          |

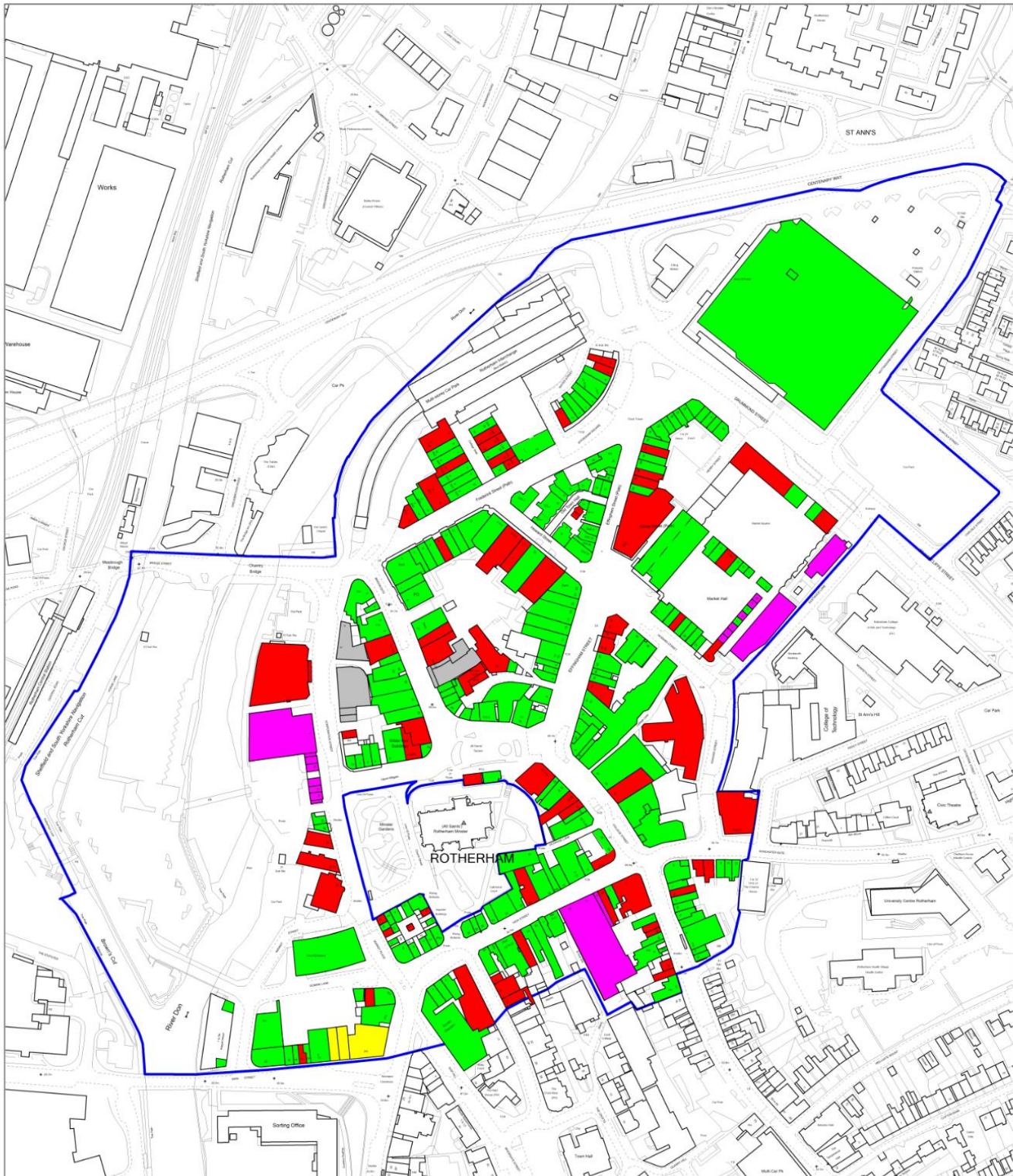
## 2022 Survey Results

|                             |                                   | Jan 2022 |      | Apr 2022 |      | Jul 2022 |      | Oct 2022 |      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|----------|------|
|                             |                                   | No./sqm  | %    | No./sqm  | %    | No./sqm  | %    | No./sqm  | %    |
| Whole Town Centre           | Total Units                       | 276      | -    | 276      | -    | 277      | -    | 277      | -    |
|                             | Total Units Vacant                | 77       | 27.9 | 74       | 26.8 | 75       | 27.1 | 76       | 27.4 |
|                             | Total Floorspace (sqm)            | 60,534   | -    | 60,534   | -    | 60,863   | -    | 60,863   | -    |
|                             | Total Floorspace Vacant (sqm)     | 15,863   | 26.2 | 15,301   | 25.3 | 17,454   | 28.7 | 17,045   | 28.0 |
|                             | Total Units Demolished            | -        | -    | -        | -    | 2        | -    | -        | -    |
|                             | Total Floorspace Demolished (sqm) | -        | -    | -        | -    | 1,088    | -    | -        | -    |
|                             | Derelict                          | 5        | -    | 5        | -    | 5        | -    | 5        | -    |
| Primary Shopping Frontage   | Total Units                       | 131      | -    | 131      | -    | 131      | -    | 131      | -    |
|                             | Total Units Vacant                | 30       | 22.9 | 30       | 22.9 | 32       | 24.4 | 33       | 25.2 |
|                             | Total Floorspace (sqm)            | 35,437   | -    | 35,437   | -    | 35,437   | -    | 35,437   | -    |
|                             | Total Floorspace Vacant (sqm)     | 5,752    | 16.2 | 5,905    | 16.7 | 6,997    | 19.7 | 6,840    | 19.3 |
|                             | Total Units Demolished            | -        | -    | -        | -    | 1        | -    | -        | -    |
|                             | Total Floorspace Demolished (sqm) | -        | -    | -        | -    | 374      | -    | -        | -    |
| Secondary Shopping Frontage | Total Units                       | 103      | -    | 103      | -    | 103      | -    | 103      | -    |
|                             | Total Units Vacant                | 31       | 30.1 | 29       | 28.2 | 27       | 26.2 | 28       | 27.2 |
|                             | Total Floorspace (sqm)            | 15,123   | -    | 15,123   | -    | 15,123   | -    | 15,123   | -    |
|                             | Total Floorspace Vacant (sqm)     | 4,836    | 32.0 | 4,587    | 30.3 | 4,472    | 29.6 | 4,587    | 30.3 |
|                             | Total Units Demolished            | -        | -    | -        | -    | 1        | -    | -        | -    |
|                             | Total Floorspace Demolished (sqm) | -        | -    | -        | -    | 714      | -    | -        | -    |

## National Trends

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) has released sales figures for the Christmas period (27<sup>th</sup> November – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022), which saw an increase of 6.9% against an increase of 2.1% in 2021. However, the Chief Executive of BRC states: “despite the stronger sales, growth remained below inflation, making December the ninth consecutive month of falling volumes.” and forecast challenging months ahead due to the increasing living cost for customers and energy bills for retailers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/christmas-boosts-sales-but-head-winds-for-2023/>



■ Occupied 
 ■ Vacant 
 ■ Derelict 
 ■ To be refurbished 
 ■ To be redeveloped 
  Town Centre Boundary

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## Appendix 1: Data monitoring principles

The monitoring of town centre data is undertaken based on the following principles:

- A. Data is measured for three distinct areas in accordance with the Rotherham Local Plan: the whole town centre, that part of the centre defined as Primary Shopping Frontage, and that part defined as Secondary Shopping Frontage.
- B. Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages each consist of several physically separate areas. Data is monitored based on the total combined areas for Primary and for Secondary Frontages.
- C. Ground floor uses only are monitored; uses on upper floors and basements are excluded.
- D. Premises are not counted where they are derelict or where they are unoccupied, and redevelopment is expected to take place within a reasonable period of time. This approach reflects the fact that these premises are not available to come back into use within a reasonable period of time. For example, currently the derelict buildings on Corporation Street are excluded, as is Riverside Precinct which has been demolished for redevelopment.
- E. The following data is recorded: business type, operator name, estimated floorspace, and the planning Use Class which the use falls within.

In September 2020, the Use Class Order changed significantly with the introduction of Class E which includes the former Classes A1, A2, A3, B1 and some D1/D2 uses. A summary of the changes<sup>3</sup> is set out below:

| Use  | Use Class up to 31 August 2020 | Use Class from 1 September 2020 | Use   | Use Class up to 31 August 2020 | Use Class from 1 September 2020 |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Shop not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop                | A1                             | F.2                             | Hotels, boarding and guest houses   | C1                             | C1                              |
| Shop   | A1                             | E                               | Residential institutions  | C2                             | C2                              |
| Financial and professional services (not medical)  | A2                             | E                               | Secure residential institutions   | C2a                            | C2a                             |
| Café or restaurant   | A3                             | E                               | Dwelling houses   | C3                             | C3                              |
| Pub or drinking establishment  | A4                             | Sui generis                     | Use of a dwellinghouse by 3-6 residents as a 'house in multiple occupation'   | C4                             | C4                              |
| Take away  | A5                             | Sui generis                     | Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centre   | D1                             | E                               |
| Office other than a use within Class A2  | B1a                            | E                               | Schools, non-residential education and training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts | D1                             | F.1                             |
| Research and development of products or processes  | B1b                            | E                               | Cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls   | D2                             | Sui generis                     |
| For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area) | B1c                            | E                               | Gymnasiums, indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms   | D2                             | E                               |
| Industrial   | B2                             | B2                              | Hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community  | D2                             | F.2                             |
| Storage or distribution  | B8                             | B8                              | Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms                   | D2                             | F.2                             |

Sui Generis includes uses which do not fall within any use class and include: public house, wine bar, or drinking establishment, drinking establishment with expanded food provision, hot food takeaway, betting offices/shops, pay day loan shops, theatres, nightclubs, taxi businesses and casinos.

<sup>3</sup> <https://lichfields.uk/media/6158/guide-to-the-use-classes-order-in-england.pdf>