

**PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:**

**TOWN CENTRES AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS**

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Planning Policy Guidance notes set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning. Local planning authorities must take their content into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance may also be material to decisions in individual planning applications and appeals.

This PPG updates and replaces the guidance given in PPG 6, "Town Centres and Retail Developments", published in July 1993. The key features of this guidance are:

- I. on planning for town centres and retailing:
  - emphasis on a plan-led approach to promoting development in town centres, both through policies and the identification of locations and sites for development;
  - emphasis on the sequential approach to selecting sites for development, for retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses; and
  - support for local centres.
- ii. on town centres:
  - promotion of mixed-use development and retention of key town centre uses;
  - emphasis on the importance of a coherent town centre parking strategy in maintaining urban vitality, through a combination of location, management and pricing of parking for different user groups;
  - promotion of town centre management to develop clear standards of service and improve quality for town centre users; and
  - promotion of good urban design, including attractive and secure car parks.
- iii. on assessment of retail proposals:
  - clarifying the three key tests for assessing retail developments: impact on vitality and viability of town centres; accessibility by a choice of means of transport; and impact on overall travel and car use;
  - how to assess out-of-centre developments; and, finally,
  - how certain new types of retail development should be assessed.

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## **1. OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH**

### **Objectives**

1.1 The Government's objectives are:

- to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres;
- to focus development, especially retail development, in locations where the proximity of businesses facilitates competition from which all consumers are able to benefit and maximises the opportunity to use means of transport other than the car;
- to maintain an efficient, competitive and innovative retail sector; and
- to ensure the availability of a wide range of shops, employment, services and facilities to which people have easy access by a choice of means of transport.

It is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve existing commercial interests or to prevent innovation.

1.2 These objectives seek to promote sustainable development and are consistent with the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy and with PPG13: Transport.

1.3 Town and district centres should be the preferred locations for developments that attract many trips, and local planning authorities should adopt planning policies to:

- locate major generators of travel in existing centres, where access by a choice of means of transport, not only by car, is easy and convenient;
- enable town, district and local centres to meet the needs of residents of their area;
- safeguard and strengthen existing local centres, in both urban and rural areas, which offer a range of everyday community, shopping and employment opportunities;
- maintain and improve choice for people to walk, cycle or catch public transport; and
- ensure an appropriate supply of attractive, convenient and safe parking for shopping and leisure trips.

### **The Plan-led Approach**

1.4 Regional planning guidance should set out the development strategy for each region, indicating the role that the network of town centres should play and proposing a broad strategy for its development, including the scope, if any, for additional regional shopping centres.

1.5 Structure plans and UDP Part Is, following consultation with business interests and the

local community, should set out the hierarchy of centres and the strategy for the location of employment, shopping, leisure and entertainment, hospitals, higher education and other uses which generate many trips and should be well served by public transport. In particular, the development plan should indicate a range and hierarchy of centres, from city centre, through town centre, district centre to local centres and village centres, where investment in new retail and other development will be promoted and existing provision enhanced. Local planning authorities should, in indicating a hierarchy of centres, recognise that the role, function and relative importance of centres will change over time.

1.6 Local plans and UDP Part IIs should, in consultation with business interests and the local community, consider existing provision and identify sites for development. Where site assembly is required, the plan should indicate what action the local planning authority will take to accelerate the process, including, if necessary, compulsory purchase. (More detail on the treatment of these issues in structure and local plans is in Annex B.)

1.7 Development plans should plan positively for such uses, working with the private sector to assess need or market demand, and identify locations and sites for development. Depending on local circumstances, it may be appropriate to designate areas of the town centre for retaining or enhancing the provision of particular uses, such as shopping, leisure, entertainment, education, health or employment.

### **Preferred Locations: the sequential approach**

1.8 The Government wishes local planning authorities to take a positive approach, in partnership with the private sector, in identifying additional sites for retail development.

1.9 Where the development plan has not yet identified such sites, local planning authorities should consider preparing development briefs for key town centre sites, to be incorporated in the development plan at the first opportunity. In the absence of a planning brief, if a developer is proposing an out-of-centre development the onus will be on the developer to demonstrate that he has thoroughly assessed all potential town centre options.

1.10 In drawing up their development plans, local planning authorities should, after considering the need for new development, adopt a sequential approach to selecting sites for new retail development. Both local planning authorities and developers selecting sites for development should be able to demonstrate that all potential town centre options have been thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered for development for key town centre uses. If, however, there is no need or capacity for further developments, there will be no need to identify additional sites in the town.

1.11 Adopting a sequential approach means that first preference should be for town centre sites, where suitable sites or buildings suitable for conversion are available, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres and only then out-of-centre sites in locations that are accessible by a choice of means of transport.

1.12 The Government recognises that the approach requires flexibility and realism from local planning authorities, developers and retailers. Developers and retailers will need to be more

flexible about the format, design and scale of the development, and the amount of car parking, tailoring these to fit the local circumstances. Local planning authorities should be sensitive to the needs of retailers and other town centre businesses and identify, in consultation with the private sector, sites that are suitable, viable for the proposed use and likely to become available within a reasonable period of time.

1.13 Not all centres, particularly small and historic towns, will have sites that are suitable in terms of size, parking, traffic generation or servicing arrangements for large-scale developments in the town centre itself. In such centres, developments should be of a scale appropriate to the size of the centre. There may also be sites in town centres which are currently subject to constraints, such as multiple ownership. Where they are identified as potential sites, local planning authorities should indicate how these constraints could be resolved.

1.14 As sites may become available after the local plan has been adopted, local planning authorities should include criteria-based policies in line with this PPG in their plan.

1.15 This approach should also apply to all key town centre uses which attract a lot of people, including commercial and public offices, entertainment, leisure, and other such uses. These should be encouraged to locate in city, town and district centres. Smaller-scale facilities, such as health centres, branch libraries, local offices of the local authority, primary schools, pubs and restaurants, should be encouraged in local centres.

1.16 Where out-of-centre developments are proposed, the following key considerations should be applied:

- the likely harm to the development plan strategy;
- the likely impact of the development on the vitality and viability of existing town centres, including the evening economy, and on the rural economy;
- their accessibility by a choice of means of transport; and
- their likely effect on overall travel patterns and car use.

These key tests are elaborated below in Section 4.

1.17 Wherever there is a clearly defined need for major travel-generating uses which cannot be accommodated in or on the edge of existing centres, it may be appropriate to:

- combine them with existing out-of-centre developments; and
- negotiate for improvements to public transport accessibility

to maximise access by means other than by car and to increase the ability for single trips to serve several purposes.

## **Renewal of planning permissions**

- 1.18 Local authorities should consider the implications of new or emerging plan policies designed to sustain and enhance existing centres when considering the appropriateness of renewing unimplemented planning permissions for retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses in out-of-centre locations.

## **2. TOWN CENTRES**

**BOX** In this guidance, the term "town centre" is used generally to cover city, town and suburban district centres, which provide a broad range of facilities and services and act as a focus for both the community and for public transport. It excludes small parades of shops of purely local significance. The size of centre will influence the range of activities and its function. The scale of development possible and the opportunities available will differ from place to place. The guidance will need to be interpreted according to the different circumstances of each place.

In London and other large cities, outside the central area, the principal shopping centres usually perform the role of town centres and these are usually complemented by district centres.

### **Planning for the future of town centres**

2.1 Town centres are part of our national and civic heritage, and securing their health helps to foster civic pride and local identity. It also helps promote sustainable development.

2.2 The vitality and viability of town and district centres depend on:

- retaining and developing a wide range of attractions and amenities;
- creating and maintaining an attractive environment;
- ensuring good accessibility to and within the centre; and
- attracting continuing investment in development or refurbishment of existing buildings.

2.3 The planning system should provide a positive framework to encourage appropriate investment in town centres. The Government, therefore, wishes to:

- encourage the development of town centre strategies;
- enable town centre development through development plans and by facilitating site assembly;
- attract investment into upgrading existing buildings and high-quality new development;
- encourage investment in retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses;
- encourage mixed-use development in town centres;
- encourage an increase in housing in town centres;

- promote town centre management, including maintenance of public areas;
- improve access and traffic management;
- make more effective use of town centre car parking; and
- encourage high-quality design of both urban spaces and buildings.

2.4 The appropriate strategy will vary, depending on a town centre's role, attractions, accessibility and amenity compared with competing centres. The Department has issued advice on this in 'Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge', HMSO, 1994.

2.5 Over the last few years, most town centres have flourished, but others have begun to deteriorate. Some have been in decline for much longer and have failed to attract investment. The level of choice and quality in shopping has not been sufficiently attractive to customers. Variety and activity have decreased. The Government wishes to see these town centres modernised and refurbished, but expects local authorities, landowners and developers to be realistic in their expectations. Attempts to go back to past patterns of use, against the market trends that led to deterioration, are unlikely to succeed.

2.6 Diversification of uses may be the best way forward. Vitality and viability may be found in a wider mix of uses that fits better with the surrounding community and changing retail patterns. Local authorities should consider these in consultation with retailers and others when drawing up their strategies.

### **Monitoring change**

2.7 In order to monitor the health of their town centres, local authorities should regularly collect information on key indicators, such as those in Figure 1. This should enable early signs of decline to be identified, a fuller analysis to be made, if necessary, and appropriate action to be taken. Local planning authorities may sometimes need to manage the decline in relative importance of a centre as other centres expand.

2.8 The Government provides funding through programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget, City Challenge, English Partnerships and the Department of Transport's package bids. These programmes should be used positively to promote town centre regeneration.

### **BOX FIGURE 1: MEASURING VITALITY AND VIABILITY**

The following indicators are useful for assessing the health of town centres. They provide baseline and time-series information on the health of the centre, allow comparison between centres and are useful for assessing the likely impact of out-of-centre developments. Local planning authorities should regularly collect a range of these indicators, preferably in cooperation with the private sector.

- **diversity of uses:** how much space is in use for different functions - such as offices; shopping; other commercial, leisure, cultural and entertainment activities; pubs, cafes and restaurants; hotels; educational uses; housing - and how has that balance been changing?
- **retailer representation and intentions to change representation:** it may be helpful to look at the existence and changes in representation, including street markets, over the past few years, and at the demand from retailers wanting to come into the town, or to change their representation in the town, or to contract or close their representation.
- **shopping rents:** pattern of movement in Zone A rents within primary shopping areas (ie the rental value for the first 6 metres depth of floorspace in retail units from the shop window);
- **proportion of vacant street level property:** vacancies can arise even in the strongest town centres, and this indicator must be used with care. Vacancies in secondary frontages and changes to other uses will also be useful indicators;
- **commercial yields on non-domestic property (ie the capital value in relation to the expected market rental):** this demonstrates the confidence of investors in the long-term profitability of the centre for retail, office and other commercial developments. This indicator should be used with care;
- **pedestrian flows:** the numbers and movement of people on the streets, in different parts of the centre at different times of the day and evening, who are available for businesses to attract into shops, restaurants or other facilities.
- **accessibility:** the ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel, including the quality, quantity and type of car parking, the frequency and quality of public transport services, the range of customer origins served and the quality of provision for pedestrians and cyclists;
- **customer views and behaviour:** regular surveys of customer views will help authorities in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of town centre improvements and in setting further priorities. Interviews in the town centre and at home should be used to establish views of both users and non-users of the centre. This could establish the degree of linked trips.
- **perception of safety and occurrence of crime:** this should include views and information on safety and security.
- **state of the town centre environmental quality:** this should include information on problems (such as air pollution, noise, clutter, litter and graffiti) and positive factors (such as trees, landscaping, open spaces)

## **Town centre strategies**

2.9 One way of encouraging private investors and infrastructure providers to enhance town centres is for the local authority to involve them in the preparation of a town centre strategy. In partnership with the private sector, property owners, infrastructure agencies and the community, the local planning authority should:

- assess the role of the town centre and the scope for change, renewal and diversification;
- identify the essential qualities of the centre and seek to ensure that it meets the needs of the community it serves; and
- draw up a strategy and action plan for the centre.

2.10 The strategy can be prepared at any time, but should be translated into the development plan at the first opportunity. This is essential to provide the planning framework for the strategy, including:

- locational policies;
- identified sites, especially if site assembly using compulsory purchase powers is required; and
- traffic management and parking policies.

2.11 The Government is committed to promoting town centre management. An indication of what this involves is given in Annex C.

## **Diversity of use**

2.11 The diversity of uses in town centres, and their accessibility to people living and working in the area, make an important contribution to their vitality and viability.

2.12 The local planning authority should therefore encourage diversification of uses in the town centre as a whole. Whilst recognising and supporting the shopping function of the primary shopping area, and of distinct quarters in larger city centres, policies should reflect the differences between the type and size of centre. Different but complementary uses, during the day and in the evening, can reinforce each other, making town centres more attractive to local residents, shoppers and visitors. Leisure and entertainment facilities, museums and libraries, hotels and conference centres, street markets, restaurants, pubs, bars and cafés, universities and colleges all add variety.

## **Mixed-use developments and housing**

2.13 Local planning authorities should use their development plans to set out policies for mixed-use development in town centres by identifying suitable areas and sites, and issuing

planning briefs. A mixture of small businesses, houses or offices in or near town centres and the occupation of flats above shops, can increase activity and therefore personal safety, while ensuring that buildings are kept in good repair. Residents and workers stimulate shopping, restaurants and cafés, and other businesses to serve them, and so in turn add to vitality. Local authorities should particularly focus on the opportunities for urban design strategies for large sites in or on the edge of town centres, as well as on opportunities for small sites and in individual buildings.

2.14 Local authorities should adopt the same positive approach to changes of use, the reuse of vacant sites and to demands for new and interim uses. They should take a pro-active role with owners to try to identify new uses for vacant buildings, especially vacant office buildings in town centres that may be suitable for conversion to other uses, such as flats or hostels. [(See also PPG1)]

2.15 Where vacant office and retail premises seem unlikely to be reused for that purpose, local planning authorities should encourage conversion to other service, leisure or residential uses. Such buildings, especially older office buildings and upper floors above shops, may be particularly suitable for conversion to flats.

2.16 To avoid areas of the town centre losing vitality due to large single-use developments, local planning authorities should promote mixed-use developments which provide additional housing and create lively street frontages.

2.17 To encourage such developments, local planning authorities should take a flexible approach to residential car parking and other standards.

### **Other key town centre uses**

2.18 Town centres contain, and should retain, a wide range of uses that need to be accessible to a large number of people, including employment, shopping, offices of local and central government, leisure and entertainment, hospitals and higher education. Thus, although retailing should, continue to underpin such centres, it is only part of what ensures the health of town centres.

### **Leisure and the evening economy**

2.19 Especially in medium-sized and larger towns, local planning authorities should, in consultation with the leisure industry, develop a clear strategy and policies for uses that support the evening economy of their town centres. This will include addressing the needs for:

- access, particularly coordination of public transport with the hours of entertainment/leisure operators;
- safe, secure car parking close to such uses, where possible shared with complementary daytime uses;

- good street lighting; and
- complementary uses, such as restaurants, cafes and pubs.

2.20 The appropriate strategy will vary with the nature and role of the centre, site availability, quality and availability of car parking, the likely traffic generated, and compatibility with adjoining uses.

2.21 Leisure uses may disturb nearby residents. Before granting planning permission, local planning authorities should ensure that the design of the development and the conditions attached mean that the amenities of nearby residents are fully considered, not least to avoid subsequent refusal of licenses on amenity grounds.

2.22 Some leisure uses, such as bingo and pubs, are best located in local centres, whilst others need to attract customers from a wider catchment area. Where appropriate sites can be found in or on the edge of town centres, these should be considered for major leisure uses, such as small multi-screen cinemas (ie up to six screens) and bowling, and planned in conjunction with parking and complementary uses. Where this is not possible, such developments should be encouraged to locate on sites which are or will, as part of the development, be made highly accessible by public transport.

2.23 Advice on "amusement centres", which particularly concern planning authorities, is in Annex D.

### **Changes of use**

2.24 Sustaining the vitality of town centres depends on flexibility in the use of floor space. The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 defines various classes of use of buildings. Changes of use within a class do not require planning permission. Part A of the Schedule to the 1987 Order comprises three classes covering uses that will generally be found in shopping areas (see Figure 2). The Government has removed the need to apply for planning permission for changes of use between essentially similar activities. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 permits changes of use between certain classes (see Figure 2)

### **BOX FIGURE 2: USE CLASSES ORDER: SUMMARY**

#### Class A1 (Shops)

- most types of shops as well as post offices, travel agents, hairdressers, funeral directors' premises, hire shops and dry cleaners.

#### Class A2 (Financial and professional services)

- banks, building societies and other financial and professional services (other than health or medical services), betting offices and other services provided

principally to visiting members of the public.

#### Class A3 (Food and drink)

- hot food takeaway shops, restaurants, cafés, snack bars, wine bars and public houses.

Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 permits change from A3 to A2 use and from both A3 and A2 uses (with display window at ground floor level) to A1 (see arrows) without the need to apply for planning permission. (Classes A, C and D of Part 3)

2.25 Changes of use, whether in town, district or local centres, can however sometimes create new concentrations of single uses, such as restaurants and take-away food outlets, where the cumulative effects can cause local problems. Such proposals should be assessed not only on their positive contribution to diversification, but also on the cumulative effects on such matters as loss of retail outlets, traffic, parking and local residential amenity. These issues should be resolved when making planning decisions, rather than permissions being unimplementable when licences are refused.

#### **Access to town centres**

2.26 Town centres are, and should remain, the focus for uses that generate a large number of trips. They typically act as the hub of public transport networks. Focusing development there can make it easier to provide good public transport, or enable one car journey to serve several purposes (i.e. linked trips). This can help reduce the number and length of car journeys and can therefore play an important role in reducing the need to travel and reliance upon the car.

2.27 If town centres are to compete effectively with out-of-centre developments, they must remain attractive to people who arrive by car. Local authorities should draw up a traffic management strategy and provide good quality car parking. This also helps give confidence to investors and retailers. Good access to town centres is essential, but heavy demand for access by car can create congestion, pollution and parking problems, which can seriously affect the convenience, attractiveness and competitiveness of town centres.

2.28 The key issues are:

- to manage both access by car and parking as part of an overall strategy for the centre; and
- to promote improvement in the quality and convenience of less environmentally - harmful means of transport so that they provide a realistic alternative to the car; and
- to meet the access and mobility needs of disabled people.

## **Traffic Management**

2.29 Local authorities should develop a comprehensive traffic management strategy that:

- takes an integrated approach to transport in town centres which complements their strategy for development;
- provides good access to the town centre by car, public transport, bicycle and on foot;
- reviews the allocation of space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport in hopping areas and the scope for implementing priority measures;
- protects and enhances the pedestrian environment;
- addresses the impact of through traffic and the need for deliveries; and
- is consistent with the advice in PPG13.

More detail on appropriate traffic management measures is at Annex E.

## **Car Parking**

2.30 Local authorities should produce a comprehensive strategy and a set of policies for the provision and management of parking designed to reinforce the attractiveness and competitiveness of the town centre and to support the locational policies in PPG13. In doing so they should consult the business community. Agreement is needed at a strategic level on the parking standards to be adopted over the whole region if possible, but certainly at structure plan level. Local authorities should ensure that parking provision at peripheral developments is not set at high levels, which would have the effect of significantly disadvantaging town centres and should also avoid competition between town centres in terms of parking provision. The standards should differentiate between town centre and out-of-centre locations. New developments should, in line with PPG13, be subject to car parking standards expressed as maximum provision, including minimum operational requirements. This applies to all non-residential uses, including retailing.

2.31 In town centres, the main need is for parking which serves the centre as a whole, rather than dedicated parking for individual developments. Local authorities should promote the provision of car parks which are shared between shoppers and others needing short-term parking. This can best be achieved through public-private partnerships, both in the provision and management of car parks. A key role for the local planning authority will be to ensure that land is allocated for this purpose.

2.32 Authorities should assess the overall availability of parking in the central area, on- and off-street, public and private, and develop policies covering all types of parking, as well as management and pricing policies for public parking. They should achieve better use of existing car parking, by adopting policies which give priority to short-term parking for visitors to the town centre, such as shoppers, and discourage long-term parking for

commuters. Much of this will need to be achieved through management and pricing policies and conditions or planning agreements, which should be carefully designed to meet local circumstances. Pedestrian access, security, lighting, signing and publicity, management and maintenance should be improved, especially in multi-storey car parks.

## **Design**

2.33 Town centres must provide a high quality environment if they are to continue to be places where people wish to come. The Government wishes to promote greater consideration of design, particularly urban design, not least in order to help improve the environment in our town centres. Local planning authorities are encouraged to undertake an urban design analysis, as part of their town centre strategy, to provide a framework for policies in their development plan and for guiding the preparation of development briefs for key sites. PPG1 advises on how local planning authorities should approach design matters generally.

2.34 The design of proposals for retail development should have proper regard to their relationship with their surroundings and should, where appropriate, develop and enhance local character. Designs should avoid presenting blank frontages to town centres or being inward-looking. Designs which add interest and variety, and which reflect local context, should be encouraged.

2.35 Development briefs should be prepared for key sites and should set out the design principles guiding future development. These principles should be based on the policies in the development plan.

2.36 In view of its effect on the character of an area, local planning authorities should consider drawing up policies and supplementary guidance on shopfront design in consultation with developers, retailers and the local community. Such policies or guidance should avoid unnecessary prescription and should encourage companies to adapt their house style taking account of the character of the local area, including the existing street frontage. When existing shops are being refurbished, they should, wherever possible, install level access, unless there are valid conservation reasons or the difference in level cannot reasonably be overcome.

2.37 Car parks, whether single or multi-storey, should be designed to fit into the existing townscape. They should normally be placed away from the street frontage closest to the town centre, and should, wherever possible, maintain existing building lines. They should be well lit and should incorporate hard or soft landscaping appropriate to their design and setting.

2.38 Street furniture and signs, if not well designed and coordinated, can cause visual clutter. Local planning authorities are therefore encouraged to review, in consultation with others including the relevant highway authority, the amount, design, siting, and maintenance of street furniture, paving and signs. A review of street furniture and paving materials will be a key issue in drawing up a strategy for improving the environment of town centres. (See Annex C)

2.39 The design of new superstores and supermarkets with dedicated car parks should incorporate recycling facilities for glass, cans, plastic and newspapers, to encourage conservation of resources and to help avoid the need for special journeys to recycling centres.

2.40 Out-of-centre developments also need to be designed in a variety of ways, reflecting local circumstances, rather than to a stereotyped format.

### **3. PLANNING FOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS**

3.1 This section discusses the planning approaches to different types of retail development. The Government wishes to provide a common framework for handling applications to ensure that retailers have confidence that applications will be handled on a consistent basis.

#### **Comparison Shopping**

3.2 The principle of the sequential approach applies to both comparison shopping and to convenience shopping. Comparison shopping should continue to be the mainstay of retailing in most sizeable town centres. Local authorities should encourage comparison shopping to locate in town centres, or failing that on the edge of centres, and should avoid the sporadic siting of comparison shopping out of centres, especially along road corridors.

3.3 Some types of retailing, such as large stores selling bulky goods, may not be able to find suitable sites either in or on the edge of town centres. In such cases, the local planning authority should still seek to ensure that such developments are located where they will be easily accessible by a choice of means of transport. (See also para 1.17)

#### **Regional shopping centres**

3.4 Experience has shown that new regional shopping centres, with more than 50,000 square metres of gross floor space, can have a substantial impact over a wide area and severely harm the nearest major centres. Although there may be circumstances where they could fulfil an important retail need, full account needs to be taken of all likely impacts. These circumstances will be limited to where:

- there is a deficiency of higher-order shopping centres;
- continued private sector investment in nearby town centres is unlikely to be seriously jeopardised;
- there is no loss of Green Belt, or important open space, habitats or countryside, or the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- public transport can adequately serve a wide population; and

- the effect on the road network and on overall car use would be acceptable.

Local planning authorities should follow the approach set out in Section 4 for new proposals, for extensions to and for redevelopment of existing regional-scale out-of-town shopping centres.

3.5 The role of and scope for such developments should be assessed in regional planning guidance, which should indicate clearly whether the prospect of a new regional shopping centre in the region is likely. In most regions, there is unlikely to be scope for an additional centre of this scale without adversely affecting the vitality and viability of existing centres. Where there is scope for a new centre, proposals should be brought forward through the development plan process, starting with the structure plan.

### **Other major retail proposals**

3.6 New forms of retailing include retail warehouse parks, warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres (see glossary at Annex A), which depend on good access to the national road network, because retailers aim to serve customers who will come by car. Some patterns of retailing, such as discount and club shopping, may emerge where convenience and price are more important to the customer than packaging, presentation or service.

3.7 Retail warehouse parks may provide large showrooms that cannot be accommodated easily in town centres. Their impact on existing centres will depend on the range of comparison shopping that they offer.

3.8 Despite restrictions on those who may shop in warehouse clubs or the range of goods that can be sold, these outlets often share many of the characteristics of very large retail outlets, in which case they should be treated, for the purpose of this guidance, as if they were retail businesses.

3.9 For factory outlet centres, the issue for planning policy purposes is not whether goods are sold at a discount, but whether such retail developments would divert trade in comparison goods from existing town centres, whether they would be accessible by a choice of means of transport and, in particular, whether they would have a significant effect on overall car use. (See paras 4.9-4.11 below) These centres would draw customers from a wide catchment area, predominantly by car, and as a result are unlikely to be consistent with the criteria in this guidance, unless these issues can be satisfactorily resolved.

3.10 Factory outlet centres can, however, play a positive role in revitalising declining shopping centres where there is unused capacity in a town or city centre.

### **Use of conditions**

3.11 Out-of-centre retail developments can change their composition over time. Planning conditions should be used to ensure that a development does not subsequently change its character unacceptably in ways that would create a development that the planning authority would have refused on the grounds of impact on vitality and viability of an existing centre.

Conditions can be used to prevent the development from being subdivided into a large number of smaller shops and to limit the range or types of goods sold.

## **Convenience Shopping**

### **Superstores and supermarkets**

3.12 Large foodstores and supermarkets often play a vital role as anchor store in maintaining the quality and range of shopping in smaller towns and district centres. They are also essential for the less mobile members of the community.

3.13 In the case of many smaller centres, particularly historic towns, the best solution may be an edge-of-centre foodstore with parking facilities, which enables car-borne shoppers to walk into the centre for their other business in town, and shoppers who arrive in the centre by other means of transport to walk to the store. One trip can thus serve several purposes, and the new shop is likely to help the economic strength of the existing town centre, be accessible to people without cars, and overall generate less car use. Town centre and edge-of-centre stores facilitate a higher proportion of linked trips.

3.14 Edge-of-centre locations will be determined by what is an easy walking distance for shoppers walking to, but more importantly away from, the store carrying shopping. The limits will be determined by local topography, including barriers to pedestrians, such as major roads and car parks, the strength of attraction of the town centre, and the attractiveness of the route to or from the town centre. However, most shoppers are unlikely to wish to walk more than 200 to 300 metres, especially when carrying shopping. The definition of edge of centre will vary between places, with large centres usually able to attract people to walk further than small centres. Edge-of-centre stores should be designed with the store on the part of the site nearest to the centre, preferably with a direct street frontage so that the shop is equally welcoming to those arriving on foot.

3.15 The amount of parking at foodstores in town centre and edge-of-centre locations should reflect the fact that a higher proportion of customers are able to arrive in the centre by means other than the car than at stores in out-of-centre locations. This should also make it easier to find sites.

3.16 Local planning authorities should negotiate for car parks in new town centre or edge-of-centre supermarkets to play a dual role, as car park for the town centre as well as the supermarket as part of the overall parking strategy. This may be done if necessary by imposing conditions or by seeking a S106 agreement. In these cases a car park of sufficient size to meet the needs of the supermarket and for short-stay town centre use will be justified.

### **Discount Stores**

3.17 Discount stores, selling a limited range of goods, can sometimes have a significant impact on town centre retailing. Assessments for such proposals should include their likely impact on the vitality and viability of shopping in the town centre.

## **District and local centres**

3.18 Local authorities should encourage, through their planning policies and actions, a wide range of facilities in district and local centres, consistent with the scale and function of the centre, to meet people's day-to-day needs, so reducing the need to travel. The need for local shops is as important within urban areas as it is in rural areas for reducing dependence on the car.

3.19 Local planning authorities should encourage appropriately-sized, local supermarkets and seek to retain post offices and pharmacies in existing district and local centres, and in village shops, and discourage their inclusion in out-of-centre retail developments by imposing appropriate conditions.

## **Shopping in rural areas**

3.20 Village shops play a vital economic and social role in rural areas. PPG 7 advises local planning authorities on planning policies for the countryside, including the need to sustain economic activity in rural areas. Village shops, whether standing alone or ancillary to other uses (eg pubs, petrol stations or farms), play a crucial role in maintaining villages as viable communities. Local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to applications for conversion and extensions to shops, designed to improve viability. Their importance to the community should be taken into account when considering applications for changing existing shops into dwellings.

3.21 Shops ancillary to other uses, such as farm shops, can also serve a vital function in rural areas, by helping to meet demand for fresh produce and providing new sources of jobs and services, so contributing to the diversity of economic activity in rural areas. In assessing such proposals, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability for the farmer of providing a service throughout the year;
- the potential impact on nearby village shops; and
- the likely impact of traffic generated and access and parking arrangements.

3.22 Shops ancillary to rural petrol stations can also fulfil a useful role, but, as with farm shops, care should be taken to ensure that they do not adversely affect easily accessible convenience shopping available to the local community.

## **Retail developments on land allocated for other uses**

3.23 Development plans should provide sites for different types of retail developments. Applications for non-retail use of these sites should not normally be permitted. Equally, planning applications for retail development should not normally be allowed on land designated for other uses in an approved development plan. This advice applies especially to land allocated for industry, employment and housing, where retail development can be shown

to have the effect of limiting the range and quality of sites that would be available for such uses. Likewise, land designated for playing fields and open space should not be used for retail development, unless replacement facilities of equal recreation and amenity value are provided. (See PPG17 for advice on loss of open space and playing fields.)

3.24 Retail development should not be used simply as a mechanism to bring vacant or derelict sites into development, unless it would help to support the vitality and viability of existing centres. Developments, especially those out of centre, may compete with town centres which may need investment for their own regeneration.

3.25 The local job creation benefits from retail proposals should be carefully assessed as there may be off-setting losses elsewhere in the area when trade is diverted and, as in the case of food retailing, losses in other sectors, such as processing, packing and distribution.

## **4. ASSESSING NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS**

4.1 New retail developments should support the Government's objectives of sustaining and enhancing existing centres and should be in accord with the strategy for retail development set out in the development plan. Where developments are proposed outside existing centres the key tests will be as set out below.

### **Impact on development plan strategy**

4.2 Development plans should specify preferred locations for retail development which sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres. Proposals for new retail developments in other locations should be assessed against the strategy in the development plan and be refused if it would undermine that strategy.

### **Impact on the vitality and viability of existing centres**

4.3 In assessing applications for developments which may have an impact on a nearby town, district or local centre, local planning authorities should consider:

- the extent to which developments would put at risk the strategy for the town centre, taking account of progress being made on its implementation, in particular through public investment;
- the likely effect on future private sector investment needed to safeguard the vitality and viability of that centre;
- changes to the quality, attractiveness and character of the centre, and to its role in the economic and social life of the community;
- changes to the physical condition of the centre;
- changes to the range of services that the centre will continue to provide; and
- likely increases in the number of vacant properties in the primary retail area.

Equally, local planning authorities should consider the likely effects on nearby centres if the proposed investment is not made. The information collected on the health of town centres (see Figure 1 above) should help in undertaking the assessment.

4.4 In assessing impact it is essential that the local authority take a long-term view. Retailers may operate under long leases that discourage them from closing unprofitable branches in town centres until the end of the lease period. Accordingly, the full impact of the development may take some years to be felt.

4.5 For leisure, entertainment and other evening uses, the implications for the evening economy of the town centre should also be assessed, in addition to the tests outlined above.

## **Accessibility**

4.6 Because new retail development should be accessible by a choice of means of transport, this will usually mean locating it in or next to town centres, in other locations which are well served by public transport, or are easily accessible on foot and bicycle. Where appropriate, planning obligations can be used to secure developer contributions to new or improved public transport or improved pedestrian access, where this is directly related to the development.

4.7 Where new retail development is proposed away from town centres, the local planning authority should identify and appraise its likely accessibility by a choice of means of transport. Such developments should be genuinely accessible by other modes, so that a significant proportion of customers and staff will be able to get to the development by means other than the car.

4.8 For new retail developments, local authorities should seek to:

- establish whether public transport will be sufficiently frequent, reliable, convenient and come directly into or past the development from a wide catchment area;
- ensure that the lack of public transport in rural areas should not preclude small-scale retail or service developments where this would serve local needs; and
- ensure that the development is easily and safely accessible for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people from the surrounding area.

## **Impact on travel and car use**

4.9 The Government is seeking, through the location of development, to influence overall levels of car travel. PPG13 seeks to reduce the need to travel, reduce reliance on the car and facilitate multi-purpose trips. It therefore sets out policies for locating major generators of travel demand in locations which are, or are capable of being, well served by public transport.

4.10 Arguments may be advanced that more stores would lead to less overall travel or would prevent trade 'leaking' away to more distant centres. Local planning authorities should consider such arguments and also whether a more central location and/or another store in a district or local centre would:

- ensure easier access to all customers;
- facilitate more linked trips; and
- help achieve the overall aim of reducing reliance on the car for all trips.

Linked trips are more likely to happen on trips made to existing centres.

4.11 For retail developments, local planning authorities should assess the likely proportion of

customers who would arrive by car and the catchment area which the development seeks to serve. Particular consideration should be given to retail proposals which seek to attract car-borne trade from a wide catchment area.

### **Assessing major shopping proposals**

4.12 The role and scope for major new retail developments of regional significance should be addressed initially in regional planning guidance. It should also be considered in structure plan preparation (including UDP Part Is), to ensure coordination with expected housing, employment, or other planned development, including transport infrastructure. Local plans and UDP Part IIs should elaborate the policies and indicate whether there is scope for such developments and the criteria to be applied in considering possible locations, and, where appropriate, contain proposals. They should also consider the scope for development or change in each major town, as a strategic background to inform local plan policies about major in-town or out-of-centre development. The key diagram in the plan should distinguish the different types of town centre, to which different policies apply.

4.13 All applications for retail developments over 2,500 square metres gross floorspace should be supported by evidence on:

- whether the applicant adopted a sequential approach to site selection and the availability of suitable alternative sites;
- their likely economic impacts on town centres, local centres and villages, including consideration of the cumulative effects of recently completed developments and outstanding planning permissions (see para 4.15);
- their accessibility by a choice of means of transport, assessing the proportion of customers likely to arrive by different means;
- the likely changes in travel patterns over the catchment area; and, where appropriate
- any significant environmental impacts.

Such assessments may occasionally be necessary for smaller developments, such as those that are likely to have a large impact on a market town or district centres, depending on the relative size and nature of the development in relation to the centre.

4.14 Impact assessments need usually only adopt a broad approach. Parties should, where possible, agree data (such as trends in turnover, population, expenditure and efficiency in the use of existing retail floorspace) before preparing impact assessments and present information on areas of dispute in a succinct and comparable form. Local planning authorities should also take proper account of other material considerations, including policy guidance set out in other PPGs.

## **Cumulative Effects**

4.15 Local planning authorities should consider not only the incremental effects of the new development on existing centres, but the likely cumulative effects of recently completed developments and of outstanding planning permissions in the catchment areas of these centres.

4.16 For this reason, the Secretary of State has directed local planning authorities to notify him of certain proposals for major retail development, before granting planning permission. This is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Shopping Direction) (England and Wales)(No.2) Direction 1993.

4.17 Local planning authorities are also required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) Direction 1992 to notify departure applications to the Secretary of State if:

- they consist of more than 10,000 square metres of gross retail floor space; or
- by reason of their scale, nature or location they would significantly prejudice the implementation of development plan policies and proposals.

4.18 These procedures provide the Secretary of State with the opportunity to call-in applications for his own decision, although applications will be called-in selectively and normally only where the proposals are of more than local importance.

## **Environmental impact**

4.19 Circular 15/88 (Welsh Office Circular 23/88) advises that the need for an Environmental Assessment<sup>1</sup> of major shopping proposals should be considered in the light of the sensitivity of the particular location. For out-of-town schemes a floor area threshold of about 20,000 square metres (gross) provides an indication of significance and the need for Environmental Assessment. For new retail proposals in urban areas on land that has not been previously intensively developed, a development of more than 10,000 square metres (gross) may require environmental assessment.

## **Cancellations**

4.20 This PPG revises PPG6 issued in July 1993, which is now cancelled.

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1. Under the Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988.

## ANNEX A

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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#### TERMINOLOGY FOR RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

New retail development takes different forms, each with its own operating characteristics, for example:-

##### **Types of Shop: food stores:**

\* **Supermarkets** - Single level, self-service stores selling mainly food, with a trading floorspace less than 2,500 square metres, often with car parking;

\* **Superstores** - Single-level, self-service stores selling mainly food, or food and non-food goods, usually with more than 2,500 square metres trading floorspace, with supporting car parking;

##### **Types of Shop: comparison goods:**

**Town centre malls** - Purpose-built centres incorporating many individual shop units, usually concentrating on comparison goods, and sometimes leisure, residential and other uses;

\* **Retail warehouses** - Large single-level stores specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods) and bulky DIY items, catering mainly for car-borne customers and often in out-of-centre locations;

\* **Retail parks** - An agglomeration of at least 3 retail warehouses;

\* **Warehouse clubs** - Out-of-centre businesses specialising in bulk sales of reduced priced goods in unsophisticated buildings with large car parks. The operator may limit access to businesses, organisations or classes of individual, and may agree to limit the number of lines sold;

\* **Factory outlet centres** - groups of shops, usually away from the town centre, specialising in selling seconds and end-of-line goods at discounted prices;

##### **Types of Centre**

\* **Local centre** - small grouping usually comprising a newsagent, a general grocery store, a sub-post office and occasionally a pharmacy, a hairdresser and other small shops of a local nature;

\* **District shopping centres** - Groups of shops, separate from the town centre, usually containing at least one food supermarket or superstore, and non-retail services such as banks, building societies and restaurants;

\* **Town centre:** in this guidance, the term "town centre" is used generally to cover city, town and traditional suburban centres, which provide a broad range of facilities and services and which fulfill a function as a focus for both the community and for public transport. It excludes small parades of shops of purely local significance. The policy guidance in this PPG should be interpreted in a way that relates reasonably to the particular size of town centre concerned.

In London and other large cities, outside the central area, the principal shopping centres usually perform the role of town centres and these are usually complemented by district centres (see above)

\* **Regional shopping centres** - Out-of-town centres generally over 50,000 square metres gross retail area, typically enclosing a wide range of comparison goods.

### **Types of location:**

\* **Edge-of-centre:** for shopping purposes, a location within easy walking distance (ie 200-300 metres) of the primary shopping area, often providing parking facilities that serve the centre as well as the store, thus enabling one trip to serve several purposes. For other uses, such as offices or leisure, edge-of-centre may be more extensive, based on how far people would be prepared to walk. For offices, this is likely to be in the region of 500 metres of the station or other public transport interchange.

\* **Out-of-centre:** a location that is clearly separate from a town centre, but not necessarily outside the urban area.

\* **Out-of-town:** An out-of-centre development on a green-field site, or on land not clearly within the current urban boundary.

\* **Primary and secondary frontages:** See paragraph 6 of Annex B and paragraph 2 of Annex D.

Retailing is a dynamic industry, and new forms of retailing may rapidly evolve which are inadequately described by current conventional terminology.

## **ANNEX B**

### **DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

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#### **Introduction**

1. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to take account of the Secretary of State's guidance in preparing their development plans. The content of this PPG will be material to:

- regional and strategic planning guidance covering the metropolitan areas, where the pattern of retail supply and demand is complex and does not coincide with local authority boundaries; and
- development plan preparation.

#### **Regional planning guidance**

2. Regional and strategic planning guidance will normally need to concern itself only with the overall strategy for a network of centres in the region (see paragraph above), as a guide to the preparation of structure plans and UDPs, including assessing the scope for new regional centres.

#### **Structure plans**

3. Structure plans should provide a clear strategy for town centres and retail development within the county. They can help to ensure a consistency of approach between districts, in relation to issues such as the parking standards for town centres. They should also indicate whether there is a role for retail developments outside town centres in accordance with the Government's objectives set out in this PPG.

#### **Local plans**

4. Local plans should generally conform with structure plans. In preparing their plans, local planning authorities should:

- \* take account of the broad forecasts of retail demand and how the retail sector is likely to want to respond to that demand over the plan period, by reference to location;
- \* consider the existing and likely relationships between the centres in the area. Different types of centre should be clearly defined in the plan, indicating the policy approach to be followed in each and the potential in each centre for change;
- \* assess the effectiveness of previous local plan policies aimed at enhancing the vitality and viability of individual centres and updating of policies as a result, where

necessary;

- \* identify a range of suitable sites on which the demand for developments might best be met, with particular attention to their accessibility by a choice of means of transport;
- \* include criteria-based policies to provide certainty to developers who may propose retail developments outside town centres, and make clear how they will:
  - assess the impact of proposals on the vitality and viability of existing town centres (see paragraphs 4.3-4.5);
  - assess their accessibility by a choice of means of transport (paragraphs 4.6-4.8); and
  - appraise and take account of the overall impact on travel in each case (see paragraphs 4.9-4.11); and
- \* set out any policies for the retention of town centre uses, such as entertainment or leisure.

5. In assessing the capacity of town centres to accommodate growth, the views of property owners and retailers should be sought and taken into account. Most town centres contain a mix of ownerships and tenancy arrangements, in contrast with out-of-town developments that are usually in a single ownership that can deliver a corporate approach to the common areas, security and car parking. Important considerations will include:

- the opportunities for expansion, improvement or redevelopment, (including sites on the edge of centres) and the need to encourage the best use of existing retail facilities;
- the scope for diversification of uses to broaden the range of town centre activities (see paragraphs 2.11-2.17 of this PPG);
- the opportunities for housing and offices, particularly in mixed-use developments; and
- accessibility, the impact of traffic, and the availability of public transport (see paragraphs 2.26-2.28 and 4.6-4.8 of this PPG);
- the need to retain and improve open space and recreational opportunities; and

6. Plans may also distinguish between primary and secondary frontages in town centres and consider their relative importance to the character of the centre. The definition of primary and secondary areas must be realistic: prevailing commercial rental values can give a good indication of the boundary between primary and secondary areas; the existence of retail uses is not itself a good indicator. While primary frontages may be restricted to a high proportion of retail uses - in particular those uses in class A1 of the Use Classes Order - there should be scope for more flexibility of use in secondary frontages; in those areas diversification has most to contribute. Plans should set out clear guidelines, to apply in development control decisions. Primary and secondary areas should be differentiated on proposals maps, if different policy approaches to each are set out in the plan.

## **Traffic management**

7. The traffic management policies for town centres that development plans should address include:

- convenient public transport facilities and bus priority measures;
- provision and location of car parking;
- routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and disabled people to access the town centre; and
- traffic calming measures.

Plans may also show any areas for special initiatives to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, and for shoppers with prams or pushchairs.

## **Retail surveys**

8. Plans should be soundly based on up-to-date information. Retailing policies and proposals in development plans should therefore be based on a factual assessment of retail developments and trends. Part II of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to keep under review the matters which may be expected to affect the development of their area or the planning of its development. It empowers them to make surveys for this purpose. Data on the quality, quantity and convenience of retailing in the area and the potential capacity for growth or change of the shopping centres will be important to ensure plan policies and proposals are properly informed. The assistance of the private sector with such surveys may be helpful.

9. The validity of any assessment will depend particularly on the quality, quantity and timeliness of the surveys undertaken. It is therefore important for an authority to ensure that such surveys are comprehensive and accurate, and that the data arising from them are kept up-to-date. Surveys might include data on population change, economic growth or decline, retail floorspace, shop counts, expenditure patterns, accessibility, pedestrian flows and consumer attitudes.

## **ANNEX C: TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT**

1. Effective management and promotion of town centres will help to enhance their vitality and viability. Many factors affecting the quality of a town centre lie outside the planning system. In partnership with the private sector and the local community, local authorities should develop a town centre management initiative, which may lead to appointing a town centre manager to improve links between public and private sector initiatives. A manager may contribute to:

- more effective achievement of local plan objectives;
- preparing a town centre strategy;
- better promotion of the town centre;
- better communications between private and public sectors;
- monitoring retail, leisure and other trends and the town centre's competitive position;
- improved identification and use of resources;
- coordination of cleaning, maintenance and security; and
- more effective use and management of car parks, including safety and security issues.

2. For centres too small to support a town centre manager, the sharing of such a post between several centres may be an option.

3. Good town centre management will bring together the relevant public agencies, residents, retailers, leisure operators, developers and investors and will ensure the proper coordination and development of services to the town centre. Detailed non-statutory town centre management strategies, drawn up within the context of the local plan, can bring forward such initiatives as:

- improvements to the approaches to town centres;
- environmental improvements and the enhancement of open space;
- street cleaning and refuse services that meet the needs of business;
- leisure, recreation and entertainment activities;
- crime prevention and safety improvements (eg CCTV);
- provision of quality, safe, and secure car parks with improved management and

maintenance;

- an improved pedestrian environment;
- provision for disabled and elderly people, and those with young children;
- improved accessibility;
- setting clear standards for town centre services, publicising them and reporting on performance;
- obtaining feedback through regular customer surveys;
- improved signing and information;
- works of art in public spaces; and
- promotional advertising.

Such an approach can generate civic pride among local residents and give confidence to investors and retailers.

## ANNEX D

### AMUSEMENT CENTRES

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1. This annex sets out the Government's policy on the location of amusement centres. Noise and general disturbance, which depend partly upon the kind of amusement proposed and the expected clientele, greatly affect amenity. It may be appropriate to attach conditions limiting opening hours. Noise can sometimes be attenuated by the imposition of suitable planning conditions (dealing, for example, with insulation, self-closing doors, the enclosure of the front of the premises, or the prohibition of external loud-speakers). Account will always need to be taken of the amount of noise already generated in the area. It will not normally be reasonable to expect amusement centres to be quieter than their neighbours. However, account should be taken of the likely impact on the neighbourhood of disturbance generated, if for example an amusement centre were to become a focal point for gatherings of young people.

2. Amusement centres are most appropriately sited in secondary shopping areas, or in areas of mixed commercial development. They are unlikely to be acceptable in primary shopping areas, close to housing, or near schools, churches, hospitals and hotels. An amusement centre which is likely to affect visual amenity or cause noise or disturbance will normally be out of place, especially in conservation areas or other places of special architectural or historic character. Different considerations may arise in resort towns, where the seafront or pier may be preferred locations. The development plan should give guidance in such cases.

3. Where a few amusement machines are installed in premises used for other purposes, for example cafes and hotels, planning permission may not be required if the use is ancillary to the primary use of the building. In case of doubt, the local planning authority should be consulted.

#### **Other controls**

4. Besides planning permission, premises with amusement-with-prizes machines require a permit from a local authority under the Gaming Act 1968 before they can operate. In considering the use of premises for this purpose, a local authority may take account of the social considerations in its area. A local authority's discretion to refuse a permit is unfettered by the grant of planning permission. Local authorities should bear in mind that planning and licensing are two separate control regimes, intended to address separate issues.

## **ANNEX E:**

### **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TOWN CENTRES**

1. These strategies should include:

- traffic management, including driver information and signing;
- traffic restraint and traffic calming measures;
- improvements to the design of town centre roads, especially junctions, to give greater priority to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and to improve the quality of design of and materials used in traffic schemes;
- measures to improve the pedestrian environment, including wider footways, more direct and safer pedestrian routes and crossings;
- parking managed for the benefit of the town centre, including park-and-ride facilities as an alternative to town centre parking;
- goods delivery, including exploring innovative approaches;
- improvements to public transport, including well-located bus stops and shelters, bus priority measures, co-ordinated service information, and convenient arrangements for access and interchange, and convenient taxi facilities;
- measures to improve access by cyclists and improved facilities, including secure parking in the town centre;
- networks for safer walking and cycling which focus on town centres;
- improvements to meet the needs of disabled and elderly people; and
- in the case of edge-of-centre sites, sensitive location and design of retail developments to ensure attractive links and ease of access to the town centre on foot or by bus.

2. Such a strategy can form the basis of authorities' bids for capital funding under the Department of Transport's "package approach". Such strategies will be essential to maintaining and enhancing the competitiveness of town centres and will involve increased collaboration between local authorities and departments within local authorities.

3. Disabled and elderly people, as well as shoppers with prams, pushchairs or cycles, who need good access to shops and other facilities. Local authorities should carry out a survey of the access and mobility needs of people coming to the town centre and ensure that:

- public transport stops are conveniently located, free from obstructions;

- level access is provided to shops;
  - parking facilities are reserved for disabled people;
  - covered areas are provided close to shops and transport routes; and
  - the provision of seating, good pavement design and surfacing materials, dropped kerbs or raised pedestrian crossings and other pedestrian priority measures.
5. Local authorities should also consider introducing a "shopmobility" scheme.