



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister

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Creating sustainable communities

# Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres

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# Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres (PPS6)

This Planning Policy Statement replaces Revised Planning Policy Guidance Note 6: Town Centres and Retail Developments (PPG6, 1996) and subsequent policy statements<sup>1</sup>.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out the Government's national policies and principles on different aspects of planning. The policies in this statement apply throughout England and focus on a range of issues relating to planning for the future of town centres and the main uses that relate to them. These policies complement, but do not replace or override, other national planning policies and should be read in conjunction with other relevant statements of national planning policy. The policies set out in this statement should be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of revisions to Regional Spatial Strategies, by the Mayor of London in relation to the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London and by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents, and may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

A number of other documents which provide guidance or useful information which may help inform the development of policy and managing town centres are listed in Annex B.

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<sup>1</sup> The Parliamentary Answers given by the Planning Ministers: Nick Raynsford on 5 December 1997; Richard Caborn on 11 February 1999 (the Caborn Statement), together with Mr Caborn's contribution to a debate in the House of Commons on 11 March 1999; and, Tony McNulty on 10 April 2003 (the McNulty Statement). The Government Responses to Select Committees in July 1997 and May 2000.



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# Chapter 1

## The Government's Objectives

- 1.1 Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning<sup>2</sup>. The planning system has a key role in facilitating and promoting sustainable and inclusive patterns of development, including the creation of vital and viable town centres. The Government is committed to developing and supporting successful, thriving, safer and inclusive communities, both urban and rural – a vision set out in the Communities Plan.
- 1.2 This Planning Policy Statement covers town centres<sup>3</sup> and the main town centre uses, as set out in Paragraph 1.8 below.
- 1.3 The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:
  - planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and
  - promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.
- 1.4 There are other Government objectives which need to be taken account of in the context of the key objective in Paragraph 1.3 above:
  - enhancing consumer choice by making provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community, and particularly socially-excluded groups;
  - supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors, with improving productivity; and
  - improving accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport.
- 1.5 The following of the Government's wider policy objectives are also relevant, insofar as they would not be inconsistent with the key objective in Paragraph 1.3 above:
  - to promote social inclusion, ensuring that communities have access to a range of main town centre uses, and that deficiencies in provision in areas with poor access to facilities are remedied;
  - to encourage investment to regenerate deprived areas, creating additional employment opportunities and an improved physical environment;
  - to promote economic growth of regional, sub-regional and local economies;
  - to deliver more sustainable patterns of development, ensuring that locations are fully exploited through high-density, mixed-use development and promoting sustainable transport choices, including reducing the need to travel and providing alternatives to car use; and

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<sup>2</sup> The approach to delivering sustainable development through the planning system is set out in Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1).

<sup>3</sup> References to town centre(s) or to centre(s) throughout this policy statement apply to all the types of centre described in Table 1 of Annex A, except where otherwise stated.

- to promote high quality and inclusive design, improve the quality of the public realm and open spaces, protect and enhance the architectural and historic heritage of centres, provide a sense of place and a focus for the community and for civic activity and ensure that town centres provide an attractive, accessible and safe environment for businesses, shoppers and residents.
- 1.6 Through regional spatial strategies (in London the Spatial Development Strategy)<sup>4</sup> and local development documents, regional planning bodies and local planning authorities respectively should implement the Government's objectives for town centres, by planning positively for their growth and development. They should therefore:
- develop a hierarchy and network of centres;
  - assess the need for further main town centre uses and ensure there is the capacity to accommodate them;
  - focus development in, and plan for the expansion of, existing centres as appropriate, and at the local level identify appropriate sites in development plan documents;<sup>5</sup>
  - promote town centre management, creating partnerships to develop, improve and maintain the town centre, and manage the evening and night-time economy; and
  - regularly monitor and review the impact and effectiveness of their policies for promoting vital and viable town centres.
- 1.7 It is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition, preserve existing commercial interests or to prevent innovation.
- 1.8 The main town centre uses to which this policy statement applies are:
- retail (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres);
  - leisure, entertainment facilities, and the more intensive sport and recreation uses<sup>6</sup> (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls);
  - offices, both commercial and those of public bodies; and
  - arts, culture and tourism (theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels, and conference facilities).
- 1.9 In addition, housing<sup>7</sup> will be an important element in most mixed-use, multi-storey developments.

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<sup>4</sup> References to regional spatial strategies in this policy statement also apply to the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, also known as the 'London Plan'.

<sup>5</sup> References to development plan documents in this policy statement refer to those development plan documents which are relevant to planning for town centres and main town centre uses.

<sup>6</sup> See also Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17).

<sup>7</sup> More detailed policy on planning for housing is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3).

## Chapter 2

# Positive Planning for Town Centres: A Plan-Led Approach

- 2.1 In order to deliver the Government's objective of promoting vital and viable town centres, development should be focused in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them. Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should:
- actively promote growth and manage change in town centres;
  - define a network and a hierarchy of centres each performing their appropriate role to meet the needs of their catchments; and
  - adopt a proactive, plan-led approach to planning for town centres, through regional and local planning.
- 2.2 Local authorities should use tools such as area action plans, compulsory purchase orders and, where considered appropriate, town centre strategies to address the transport, land assembly, crime prevention, planning and design issues associated with the growth and management of their centres. These matters are addressed in more detail below.

### **PROMOTING GROWTH AND MANAGING CHANGE IN TOWN CENTRES**

- 2.3 Set within a regional planning context, local planning authorities should actively plan for growth and manage change in town centres over the period of their development plan documents by:
- selecting appropriate existing centres to accommodate the identified need for growth by:
    - making better use of existing land and buildings, including, where appropriate, redevelopment;
    - where necessary, extending the centre.
  - managing the role and function of existing centres by, for example, promoting and developing a specialist or new role and encouraging specific types of uses in some centres; and
  - planning for new centres of an appropriate scale in areas of significant growth or where there are deficiencies in the existing network of centres.
- 2.4 Wherever possible, growth should be accommodated by more efficient use of land and buildings within existing centres. Local planning authorities should aim to increase the density of development, where appropriate. Opportunities within existing centres should be identified for sites suitable for development or redevelopment or where conversions and changes of use will be encouraged for specific buildings or areas. Local planning authorities should also seek to ensure that the number and size of sites identified for development or redevelopment are sufficient to meet the scale and type of need identified.

- 2.5 Where growth cannot be accommodated in identified existing centres, local planning authorities should plan for the extension of the primary shopping area if there is a need for additional retail provision or, where appropriate, plan for the extension of the town centre to accommodate other main town centre uses.
- 2.6 Where extensions of primary shopping areas or town centres are proposed, these should be carefully integrated with the existing centre both in terms of design and to allow easy access on foot. Extension of the primary shopping area or town centre may also be appropriate where a need for large developments has been identified and this cannot be accommodated within the centre. Larger stores may deliver benefits for consumers and local planning authorities should seek to make provision for them in this context. In such cases, local planning authorities should seek to identify, designate and assemble larger sites adjoining the primary shopping area (ie. in edge-of-centre locations).
- 2.7 In areas of significant growth or where deficiencies are identified in the existing network of centres, new centres may be designated through the plan-making process, with priority given to deprived areas<sup>8</sup>.
- 2.8 Where existing centres are in decline, local planning authorities should assess the scope for consolidating and strengthening these centres by seeking to focus a wider range of services there, promote the diversification of uses and improve the environment. Where reversing decline is not possible, local planning authorities should recognise that these centres may need to be reclassified at a lower level within the hierarchy of centres, and reflect this revised status in the policies applied to the area. This may include allowing retail units to change to other uses, whilst aiming, wherever possible, to retain opportunities for vital local services, such as post offices and pharmacies.

## NETWORKS AND HIERARCHIES OF CENTRES

- 2.9 In promoting and enhancing existing centres, regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should consider the network of centres (ie. the pattern of provision of different centres) and their relationship in the hierarchy. At both regional and local level, authorities should plan carefully how best to distribute any identified growth to achieve the objectives of their spatial strategies. In defining their objectives, regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should consider whether there is a need to rebalance the network of centres to ensure that it is not overly dominated by the largest centres, that there is a more even distribution of town centre uses, and that people's everyday needs are met at the local level. In considering the development of the network and hierarchy, regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should consider:

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<sup>8</sup> For purposes of this policy statement, areas which are experiencing significant levels of 'multiple deprivation', typically those within the most deprived 10% of 'super output areas', as identified in the English Indices of Deprivation and defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

- whether there is a need to avoid an over-concentration of growth in the higher level centres;
  - the need for investment and growth to strengthen other centres, especially those needing regeneration; and
  - the need to address deficiencies in the network by promoting centres to function at a higher level in the hierarchy or designating new centres.
- 2.10 Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should recognise that networks and hierarchies are dynamic, and will change over time, but any significant change in role and function of centres, upward or downward, should come through the development plan process, rather than through planning applications. Changes to the status of existing centres or the identification of new centres which are of more than local importance should be addressed initially at the regional level through regional spatial strategies. Changes to the role and status of lower level centres, and the implications of changes in the status of higher level centres, should be brought forward through development plan documents. In all cases, consideration should be given to the relevant transport policies and strategies.
- 2.11 A general description of the types of centre and their main characteristics is set out in Table 1, Annex A.

## **A PRO-ACTIVE, PLAN-LED SYSTEM**

### **The Role of Regional Plans**

- 2.12 Regional spatial strategies should set out a vision and strategy for the region's growth, particularly for higher level centres in the region and their role as the focus for major retail, leisure, office and other main town centre development of more than local importance, and provide a strategic framework for planning at the local level. In preparing revisions to regional spatial strategies, regional planning bodies must have regard to the Regional Economic Strategy and should work in partnership with regional stakeholders and ensure community involvement. Government policy on preparing revisions to regional spatial strategies is set out in Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies (PPS11).
- 2.13 In preparing revisions to their regional spatial strategy, the regional planning body should:
- develop a strategic framework for the development of a network of centres in their region and, where appropriate, for any identified sub-regions taking into account the need to avoid an over-concentration of growth in the higher level centres;
  - make strategic choices about those centres of regional and, where appropriate, sub-regional significance:

- where major growth should be encouraged; and
  - where appropriate, the need for new centres in areas of planned major growth.
  - in broad terms, assess the overall need for additional floorspace over the regional spatial strategy period, especially for comparison retail, leisure and office development, and for five-year periods within it, and, having regard to capacity and accessibility of centres, identify where the identified needs would best be met having regard to the Government’s objectives; and
  - monitor and regularly review the implementation of the strategy (see Chapter 4).
- 2.14 The need for major town centre development of regional or sub-regional importance should be addressed through the regional spatial strategy. New out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centres (see Annex A) have a substantial impact over a wide area and can harm the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment of the proposed development. Having regard to the key objective of the Government’s town centre policy, it is unlikely that such new development or the expansion of an existing out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centre will meet the requirements of that policy. Were a need for a new or an expanded out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centre to be identified, it should be addressed through the regional spatial strategy. Proposals to renew or replace existing facilities in out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centres, where this would involve neither additional floorspace nor additional car parking facilities, may, however, be appropriate, subject to the appropriate policy considerations. There may be a need to improve public transport to existing out-of-centre regional or sub-regional shopping centres, but this will, in itself, not justify extending them.

### **The Role of Plans at the Local Level**

- 2.15 Local planning authorities should adopt a positive and proactive approach to planning for the future of all types of centres within their areas. Having regard to the regional spatial strategy and reflecting their community strategy, local planning authorities should, through the core strategy development plan document, set out a spatial vision and strategy for the network and hierarchy of centres, including local centres, within their area, setting out how the role of different centres will contribute to the overall spatial vision for their area.
- 2.16 Local planning authorities should work in conjunction with stakeholders and the community to:
- assess the need for new floorspace for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses, taking account of both quantitative and qualitative considerations;
  - identify deficiencies in provision, assess the capacity of existing centres to accommodate new development, including, where appropriate, the scope for extending the primary shopping area and/or town centre, and identify centres in decline where change needs to be managed;

- identify the centres within their area where development will be focused, as well as the need for any new centres of local importance, and develop strategies for developing and strengthening centres within their area;
  - define the extent of the primary shopping area and the town centre, for the centres in their area on their Proposals Map (see Annex A);
  - identify and allocate sites in accordance with the considerations set out below (paragraphs 2.28–2.51);
  - review all existing allocations and reallocate sites which do not comply with this policy statement;
  - develop spatial policies and proposals to promote and secure investment in deprived areas by strengthening and/or identifying opportunities for growth of existing centres, and to seek to improve access to local facilities (paragraphs 2.55–2.59); and
  - set out criteria-based policies, in accordance with this policy statement, for assessing and locating new development proposals, including development on sites not allocated in development plan documents.
- 2.17 In addition to defining the extent of the primary shopping area for their centres, local planning authorities may distinguish between primary and secondary frontages (see Annex A). These frontages should be realistically defined. Having regard to the need to encourage diversification of uses in town centres as whole, primary frontages should contain a high proportion of retail uses, while secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for flexibility and a diversity of uses. Where frontages are identified the appropriate local development documents should include policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.
- 2.18 Town centre strategies can play an important and complementary role in ensuring the continued vitality and viability of centres. They may be part of the evidence base for development plan documents, including area action plans and for supporting the use of compulsory purchase orders for site assembly. Guidance on design and implementation tools will be published separately. Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (PPS12) sets out the Government’s policy on the preparation of local development documents.

### **Promoting high-quality design and making efficient use of land**

- 2.19 It is essential that town centres provide a high-quality and safe<sup>9</sup> environment if they are to remain attractive and competitive. Well-designed public spaces and buildings, which are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable, are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre. Policies for the

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<sup>9</sup> Local authorities must have regard to their duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which requires them to exercise their functions with due regard to their likely effect on, and the need to prevent, crime and disorder.

design of development for main town centre uses, regardless of location, and for development in town centres, should promote high quality and inclusive design, in order to improve the character and quality of the area in which such development is located and the way it functions.

- 2.20 The Government is concerned to ensure that efficient use should be made of land within centres and elsewhere. Local planning authorities should formulate planning policies which encourage well-designed, and, where appropriate, higher-density, multi-storey development within and around existing centres, including the promotion of mixed-use development and mixed-use areas. The considerations in paragraphs 2.19 and 2.20 are also relevant to the consideration of planning applications. Guidance on design and implementation tools will be published separately.
- 2.21 Subject to other planning considerations, residential or office development should be encouraged as appropriate uses above ground floor retail, leisure or other facilities within centres. The inclusion of housing in out-of-centre mixed-use developments should not, in itself, justify additional floorspace for main town centre uses in such locations.
- 2.22 A diversity of uses in centres makes an important contribution to their vitality and viability. 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. Local planning authorities should encourage diversification of uses in the town centre as a whole, and ensure that tourism, leisure and cultural activities, which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups, are dispersed throughout the centre.

#### *Managing the Evening and Night-time Economy*

- 2.23 Local planning authorities should prepare planning policies to help manage the evening and night-time economy in appropriate centres. These policies should encourage a range of complementary evening and night-time economy uses which appeal to a wide range of age and social groups, ensuring that provision is made where appropriate for a range of leisure, cultural and tourism activities such as cinemas, theatres, restaurants, public houses, bars, nightclubs and cafes.
- 2.24 In drawing up their policies and proposals, local planning authorities should consider the scale of leisure developments they wish to encourage and their likely impact, including the cumulative impact on the character and function of the centre, anti-social behaviour, crime and the amenities of nearby residents.
- 2.25 Local authorities should ensure that there is an integrated approach to the evening and night-time economy, so that their planning policies and proposals take account of and complement their Statement of Licensing Policy and the promotion of the licensing objectives under the Licensing Act 2003. Local authorities should consider developing a local strategy for the evening and night-time economy which, when co-ordinated with other local strategies, tackles a range of issues from anti-social behaviour and crime prevention to adequate late-night transport provision to support these activities.

- 2.26 The ODPM has launched a *How To* programme<sup>10</sup> to work with leaders and practitioners in developing solutions and tools for delivering cleaner, safer, greener public spaces and town centres. This will address a range of issues, including managing the evening and night-time economy.

#### *Markets*

- 2.27 Street and covered markets (including farmers' markets) can make a valuable contribution to local choice and diversity in shopping as well as the vitality of town centres and to the rural economy. As an integral part of the vision for their town centres, local authorities should seek to retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones. Local authorities should ensure that their markets remain attractive and competitive by investing in their improvement.

#### **Site Selection and Land Assembly**

- 2.28 In selecting sites for development, local planning authorities should:
- assess the need for development (paragraphs 2.32–2.40);
  - identify the appropriate scale of development (paragraphs 2.41–2.43);
  - apply the sequential approach to site selection (paragraphs 2.44–2.47);
  - assess the impact of development on existing centres (paragraph 2.48); and
  - ensure that locations are accessible and well served by a choice of means of transport (paragraphs 2.49–2.50).
- 2.29 Local planning authorities should focus primarily on the above considerations when making decisions to allocate sites, and, consider other relevant matters (see paragraph 2.51).
- 2.30 Local authorities should work closely with business, including retailers, leisure operators, developers, other stakeholders and the community when considering sites for allocation in development plan documents.
- 2.31 Local planning authorities may need to make choices between competing development pressures in town centres and should use the allocation of new sites to secure their strategy for strengthening and improving the performance of the centre, particularly those areas requiring regeneration.

#### **a) Assess the Need for Development**

- 2.32 Need assessments for the development plan document period should be carried out as part of the plan preparation and review process, and updated regularly. Local need assessments carried out by local planning authorities should take account of the strategy for the region's

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<sup>10</sup> For further details see [www.cleanersaferegreener.gov.uk](http://www.cleanersaferegreener.gov.uk)

centres set out in the regional spatial strategy, as well as the catchment areas of each of their centres and of the catchment areas of centres outside their boundaries which extend into their area, rather than merely focusing on centres within the authority's administrative boundaries. These assessments should inform and be informed by regional needs assessments and form part of the evidence base for development plan documents. This will provide the basis for identifying the need for additional development and the appropriate scale of such development in the centres within an authority's area, bearing in mind their role and function. It will also enable the local planning authority to test alternative options and make choices about where growth should be accommodated. Guidance on undertaking assessments of need and impact for retail and leisure uses, including the relationship between regional and local needs assessments, will be published separately.

#### *Retail and Leisure*

- 2.33 In assessing the need and capacity for additional retail and leisure development, local planning authorities should place greater weight on quantitative need for additional floorspace for the specific types of retail and leisure developments. However local planning authorities should also take account of qualitative considerations. In deprived areas which lack access to a range of services and facilities, and there will be clear and demonstrable benefits in identifying sites for appropriate development to serve communities in these area, additional weight should be given to meeting these qualitative considerations.

#### *i) Quantitative Need*

- 2.34 In assessing quantitative need for additional development when preparing its development plan documents, a local planning authority should assess the likely future demand for additional retail and leisure floorspace, having regard to a realistic assessment of:

- existing and forecast population levels;
- forecast expenditure for specific classes of goods to be sold, within the broad categories of comparison and convenience goods and for main leisure sectors; and
- forecast improvements in productivity in the use of floorspace<sup>11</sup>.

Such an assessment should provide sufficient information on which to base strategic choices about where growth should be accommodated and how it can be used most effectively to strengthen or regenerate existing centres, and to address deficiencies in the existing network of centres.

#### *ii) Qualitative Need*

- 2.35 In assessing the qualitative need for additional development when preparing its development plan documents, a key consideration for a local planning authority will be to provide for consumer choice, by ensuring that:

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<sup>11</sup> Also known as retail space productivity growth which means the increase of sales density (£s per square metre) over time.

- an appropriate distribution of locations is achieved, subject to the key objective of promoting the vitality and viability of town centres and the application of the sequential approach, to improve accessibility for the whole community; and
  - provision is made for a range of sites for shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the whole community, particularly the needs of those living in deprived areas (see also paragraphs 2.55–2.58).
- 2.36 Other considerations may also be taken into account, such as the degree to which shops may be overtrading.
- 2.37 Additional benefits in respect of regeneration and employment do not constitute indicators of need for additional floorspace. However, they may be material considerations in the site selection process (see paragraph 2.51). The weight to be given to such factors will depend upon the particular local circumstances.
- 2.38 Guidance on undertaking assessments of need and impact for retail and leisure uses will be published separately.

*Offices and other main town centre uses*

- 2.39 An assessment of the need for new office floorspace over the development plan document period should be carried out as part of the plan preparation and review process, and updated regularly. At regional level this should involve the forecasting of future employment levels<sup>12</sup> and the identification in regional spatial strategies of suitable broad locations where regionally significant office development should be located. Local need assessments for office floorspace will need to be informed by regional assessments and will form part of the evidence base for development plan documents. The physical capacity of centres to accommodate new office development and the town centre's role in the hierarchy should also be relevant to planning for new office development.
- 2.40 In preparing their development plan documents local planning authorities should also consider the needs for other main town centre uses.

**b) Identify the Appropriate Scale of Development**

- 2.41 In selecting suitable sites for development, local planning authorities should ensure that the scale of opportunities identified are directly related to the role and function of the centre and its catchment. Uses which attract a large number of people should therefore be located within centres that reflect the scale and catchment of the development proposed. The scale of development should relate to the role and function of the centre within the wider hierarchy and the catchment served. The aim should be to locate the appropriate type and scale of development in the right type of centre, to ensure that it fits into that centre and that it complements its role and function.

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<sup>12</sup> See also *Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note* (ODPM, 2004).

- 2.42 Given their characteristics, local centres will generally be inappropriate locations for large-scale new development, even when a flexible approach is adopted. Accordingly, it is likely to be inappropriate in most cases to include local centres within the search area to be applied under the sequential approach for large-scale developments. Local planning authorities should therefore consider setting an indicative upper limit for the scale of developments likely to be permissible in different types of centres, and developments above these limits should be directed to centres higher up the town centre hierarchy.
- 2.43 For city and town centres (as described in Table 1, Annex A), where a need has been identified, local planning authorities should seek to identify sites in the centre, or failing that on the edge of the centre, capable of accommodating larger format developments.

### **c) Apply the Sequential Approach to Site Selection**

- 2.44 A sequential approach should be applied in selecting appropriate sites for allocation within the centres where identified need is to be met. All options in the centre (including, where necessary, the extension of the centre) should be thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered for development for main town centre uses. The sequential approach requires that locations are considered in the following order:
- first, locations in appropriate existing centres where suitable sites or buildings for conversion are, or are likely to become, available within the development plan document period, taking account of an appropriate scale of development in relation to the role and function of the centre; and then
  - edge-of-centre locations, with preference given to sites that are or will be well-connected to the centre; and then
  - out-of-centre sites, with preference given to sites which are or will be well served by a choice of means of transport and which are close to the centre and have a high likelihood of forming links with the centre.

In considering alternative sites with similar locational characteristics in terms of the sequential approach, and having regard to the strategic objectives for the network and hierarchy of town centres set out in their development plan documents, local planning authorities should give weight to those locations that best serve the needs of deprived areas. The distance thresholds used in applying the sequential approach and for searching for appropriate sites will differ for different types of development (see Table 2, Annex A).

- 2.45 Local planning authorities should, in consultation with stakeholders (including the development industry) and the community, identify an appropriate range of sites to allow for the accommodation of the identified need. Flexibility and realism is required from both local planning authorities and developers and operators in discussing the identification of sites for inclusion in development plan documents. Local planning authorities should be sensitive to the needs of the community and stakeholders, including developers and operators, and identify sites that are, or are likely to become, available for development

during the development plan document period and which will allow for the accommodation of the identified need, including sites capable of accommodating a range of business models. In planning terms, the factors that should be taken into account in considering business models are: scale, format, car parking provision and the scope for disaggregation. In turn, when proposing sites for inclusion in development plan documents, developers will need to be flexible and innovative, and should explore fully the possibility of fitting development onto more central sites (see also Paragraphs 3.16–3.18).

- 2.46 Local planning authorities should, where appropriate, include policies and proposals in development plan documents for the phasing and release of development sites over the development plan document period to ensure that those sites in preferred locations within centres are developed ahead of less central locations.
- 2.47 Guidance on applying the sequential approach will be published separately.

#### **d) Assess Impact**

- 2.48 Making additional sites available for development may have both positive and negative impacts on existing centres. Positive benefits are likely to be strongest where additional development takes place in the centre, or by an expansion of the centre, followed by edge-of-centre sites where a development would be well connected to the centre and result in a significant number of linked trips and clawback expenditure. Where a site is proposed to be allocated in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location, local planning authorities should assess the impact that the potential development of the site would have on centres within the catchment of the potential development. Where the potential development of a site or sites proposed to be allocated in a centre would substantially increase the attraction of the centre and could have an impact on other centres, the impact on other centres will also need to be assessed.

#### **e) Ensure Locations are Accessible**

- 2.49 The Government is seeking to reduce the need to travel, to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling and reduce reliance on the private car, to facilitate multi-purpose journeys and to ensure that everyone has access to a range of facilities. Good access to town centres is essential. Jobs, shopping, leisure and tourist facilities and a wide range of services should therefore be located in town centres wherever possible and appropriate, taking full advantage of accessibility by public transport. In selecting appropriate sites for allocation, local authorities should have regard to:
- i) whether the site is or will be accessible and well served by a choice of means of transport, especially public transport, walking and cycling, as well as by car; and
  - ii) the impact on car use, traffic and congestion.

Guidance on transport assessment, accessibility analysis and parking matters is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13).

- 2.50 In rural areas, local planning authorities should focus town centre development in local service centres, such as market towns and large villages, where there is potential to maximise accessibility by public transport and by walking and cycling, whilst ensuring that the lack of public transport facilities does not preclude small-scale retail or service developments, where these would serve local needs.

### **Other Relevant Matters**

- 2.51 In selecting sites for allocation in development plan documents, the local planning authority should, after assessing sites against the considerations in paragraph 2.28, consider the degree to which other considerations, including specific local circumstances, may be material to the choice of appropriate locations for development. Considerations to be taken into account in drawing up plans include:
- Physical regeneration: the benefits of developing on previously-developed sites which may require remediation;
  - Employment: the net additional employment opportunities that would arise in a locality as a result of a proposed allocation, particularly in deprived areas;
  - Economic growth: the increased investment in an area, both direct and indirect, arising from the proposed allocation and improvements in productivity, for example arising from economies of scale; and
  - Social inclusion: this can be defined in broad terms and may, in addition to the above, include other considerations, such as increasing the accessibility of a range of services and facilities to all groups.

### **Assembling Sites**

- 2.52 In planning for growth in their town centres, local planning authorities should allocate sufficient sites to meet the identified need for at least the first five years from the adoption of their development plan documents, although for large town centre schemes a longer period may be appropriate to allow for site assembly. An apparent lack of sites of the right size and in the right location should not be construed as an obstacle to site allocation and development to meet this need. Local planning authorities should consider the scope for effective site assembly using their compulsory purchase powers, to ensure that suitable sites within or on the edge-of-centres are brought forward for development, including sites that are underutilised, such as car parks and single-storey buildings, which could be redeveloped for multi-storey, mixed-use development.

### **Designation of New Centres**

- 2.53 New centres should be designated through the plan-making process where the need for them has been established, such as in areas of significant growth, or where there are deficiencies in the existing network of centres, with priority given to deprived areas where

there is a need for better access to services, facilities and employment by socially excluded groups. Whether this is done at the regional or local level will depend on the size of the proposed centre and its proposed role in the hierarchy of existing centres and how the proposed centre would function and complement the network of existing centres. Current availability or future development of transport infrastructure and choice of modes should be a key part of the decision-making process on the location of new centres.

- 2.54 Unless they are identified as centres in regional spatial strategies and/or in development plan documents, planning authorities should not regard existing out-of-centre development, comprising or including main town centre uses, such as shops, shopping centres, leisure parks or retail warehouse parks, as centres.

### **Providing for local shopping and other services**

- 2.55 A network of local centres in an authority's area is essential to provide easily accessible shopping to meet people's day-to-day needs and should be the focus for investment in more accessible local services, such as health centres and other small scale community facilities. The mix of uses in local centres should be carefully managed.
- 2.56 Deprived areas often have poor access to local shops and services. To tackle this problem, local authorities should work with the local community and retailers to identify opportunities to remedy any deficiencies in local provision. This is likely to be best achieved through strengthening existing centres or, where appropriate, proposing new local centres.
- 2.57 Larger centres have in the past been the focus for much development and investment, but local planning authorities should consider whether a more balanced network of centres should be developed within their area. In particular, they should strengthen local centres by seeking to ensure that there is a range of facilities in local centres, consistent with the scale and function of the centre, to meet people's day-to-day needs, particularly in deprived areas.
- 2.58 The need for local shops and services is equally important within urban and rural areas. Local authorities should, where appropriate, seek to protect existing facilities which provide for people's day-to-day needs and seek to remedy deficiencies in local shopping and other facilities to help address social exclusion. Using development plan documents, or where considered appropriate, other local strategies<sup>13</sup>, local authorities should take a positive approach to strengthening local centres and planning for local shops and services by working with stakeholders, including the private sector and the community. This should include:
- assessing where deficiencies exist in the provision of local convenience shopping and other facilities which serve people's day-to-day needs and identifying opportunities to remedy any deficiencies in provision;
  - involving the local community and retailers; and

<sup>13</sup> Guidance on design and implementation tools will be published separately.

- working with the private sector to seek to ensure that the identified need for new facilities will be delivered.

2.59 Guidance on preparing strategies for smaller centres will be published separately. In seeking to improve access to local shopping and other services, local planning authorities are also encouraged to work with local transport authorities in producing accessibility strategies for their area. Guidance is published in *Accessibility Planning Guidance* (DfT, 2004).

### **Rural Centres**

- 2.60 Market towns and villages should be the main service centres in rural areas, providing a range of facilities, shops and services at a scale appropriate to the needs and size of their catchment areas. They should provide a focus for economic development and rural-based industries, including markets for locally-produced food and other products, and for tourism. However, the health and vitality of many of these towns has declined in recent years, and many more are vulnerable to changing economic and lifestyle patterns.
- 2.61 The Government is committed to helping market towns manage the process of change, encourage necessary regeneration and strengthen their role as vital rural service centres. Local planning authorities should adopt policies that recognise this role and support development which enhances the vitality and viability of market towns and other rural service centres. Local planning authorities should be aware of the extent of the rural population which is dependent on a particular centre or facility, such as a village shop, and seek to protect existing facilities and promote new ones accordingly (see paragraphs 2.55 to 2.58 regarding the provision and protection of local facilities).
- 2.62 In planning for village shops and services, local planning authorities should adopt policies which:
- ensure that the importance of shops and services to the local community is taken into account in assessing proposals which would result in their loss or change of use; and
  - respond positively to proposals for the conversion and extension of shops which are designed to improve their viability.
- 2.63 Farm shops can also meet a demand for local produce in a sustainable way and can contribute to the rural economy. Care should however be taken to ensure that they do not adversely affect easily accessible convenience shopping available to the local community.
- 2.64 Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7) sets out the Government's policy on development in rural areas.

## Chapter 3

# Development Control

- 3.1 To deliver the Government's objective of promoting vital and viable town centres, development should be focussed in existing centres in order to strengthen and, where appropriate, regenerate them. Chapter 2 describes how local planning authorities should plan positively to accommodate growth, primarily within or on the edge of existing centres, and make allocations accordingly in development plan documents. This Chapter sets out the considerations which should be taken into account by local planning authorities in determining planning applications for all proposals relating to main town centre uses for:
- new development;
  - redevelopment of existing facilities;
  - extensions<sup>14</sup> to existing facilities;
  - changes of use involving development;
  - renewal of extant planning permissions; and
  - applications to vary or remove existing planning conditions, which would have the effect of creating additional floorspace (e.g. mezzanine floors) or changing the range of goods sold, thereby changing the scale and/or character of the development (see paragraphs 3.31–3.32 on the use of conditions).
- 3.2 In considering planning applications for development which include main town centre uses, before development plans can be reviewed to reflect this planning policy statement, local planning authorities should have regard to the policies in this statement as material considerations which may supersede the relevant policies in their development plan.

### ASSESSING PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.3 The key considerations for identifying sites for allocation in development plan documents, as set out in Chapter 2, apply equally to the assessment of planning applications. This Chapter sets out only the additional detail relevant to the consideration of planning applications, and should be read in conjunction with Chapter 2.
- 3.4 In the context of development control and subject to the policies set out below, local planning authorities should require applicants to demonstrate:
- a) the need for development (paragraphs 3.8–3.11);
  - b) that the development is of an appropriate scale (paragraph 3.12);
  - c) that there are no more central sites for the development (paragraphs 3.13–3.19);
  - d) that there are no unacceptable impacts on existing centres (paragraphs 3.20–3.23); and
  - e) that locations are accessible (paragraphs 3.24–3.27).

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<sup>14</sup> These include development which creates additional floorspace, such as proposals for internal alterations where planning permission is required in accordance with Section 49 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, once commenced.

- 3.5 Subject to the policies set out below, local planning authorities should assess planning applications on the basis of the above key considerations and the evidence presented. As a general rule, the development should satisfy all these considerations. In making their decision, local planning authorities should also consider relevant local issues and other material considerations.
- 3.6 In considering planning applications for the development of sites proposed to be allocated in an emerging development plan document, or for the development on unallocated sites within a proposed extension to a primary shopping area or town centre in such a document, the weight to be attached to the proposal will depend on the stage the development plan document has reached. Where an adopted development plan document allocates no new sites for development local planning authorities and applicants should take a positive attitude towards early engagement to discuss if any sites exist which may be suitable, viable or available, having regard to this policy statement.
- 3.7 The level of detail and type of evidence and analysis required to address the key considerations should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.

#### **a) Assessing the Need for Development**

- 3.8 It is not necessary to demonstrate the need for retail proposals within the primary shopping area or for other main town centre uses located within the town centre.
- 3.9 Need must be demonstrated for any application for a main town centre use which would be in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location and which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan document strategy. Specific considerations in assessing need for retail and leisure development are set out below.

##### *i) Quantitative Need*

- 3.10 A needs assessment prepared in support of a planning application should, wherever possible, be based on the assessment carried out for the development plan document, updated as required, and in the case of retail development should relate directly to the class of goods to be sold from the development ('business-based' cases will not be appropriate). The need for additional floorspace should normally be assessed no more than five years ahead, as sites in the centre may become available within that period. Assessing need beyond this time period might pre-empt future options for investment in centres, except where large town centre schemes are proposed and where a longer time period may be appropriate to allow for site assembly. The catchment area that is used to assess future need should be realistic and well related to the size and function of the proposed development and take account of competing centres.

*ii) Qualitative Need*

- 3.11 In addition to considering the quantitative need for additional retail or leisure floorspace, local planning authorities should consider whether there are qualitative considerations, as described in Chapter 2, that might provide additional justification for the development.

**b) Securing the Appropriate Scale of Development**

- 3.12 An indicative upper limit for the scale of a development (usually defined in terms of gross floorspace) which is likely to be acceptable in particular centres for different facilities may be set out in development plan documents. Where this is not the case, or where a development plan document is out-of-date, the factors to be considered in determining the appropriate scale of development in a centre are those set out in paragraphs 2.41–2.43.

**c) Applying the Sequential Approach to Site Selection**

- 3.13 The sequential approach to site selection should be applied to all development proposals for sites that are not in an existing centre nor allocated in an up-to-date development plan document (see also paragraph 3.29). The relevant centres in which to search for sites will depend on the overall strategy set out in the development plan, the nature and scale of the development and the catchment that the development seeks to serve.
- 3.14 In selecting sites, all options in the centre should be thoroughly assessed before less central sites are considered. The order for site assessment is set out in paragraph 2.44.
- 3.15 In applying the sequential approach, and considering alternative sites, developers and operators should be able to demonstrate that in seeking to find a site in or on the edge of existing centres they have been flexible about their proposed business model in terms of the following planning considerations:
- the scale of their development;
  - the format of their development;
  - car parking provision; and
  - the scope for disaggregation (see paragraphs 3.17–3.18).
- 3.16 The purpose of this exercise is to explore the possibility of enabling the development to fit onto more central sites by reducing the footprint of the proposal. In seeking to demonstrate flexibility under Paragraph 3.15 above, developers and operators should consider, in terms of scale: reducing the floorspace of the development; in terms of format: more innovative site layouts and store configurations such as multi-storey developments with smaller footprints; and, in terms of car parking: reduced or reconfigured car parking areas. However, local planning authorities should be realistic in considering whether sites are suitable, viable and available (see paragraph 3.19). Local planning authorities should take into account any genuine difficulties, which the applicant can demonstrate are likely to occur in operating the applicant's business model from the sequentially preferable site, in

terms of scale, format, car parking provision and the scope for disaggregation, such as where a retailer would be required to provide a significantly reduced range of products. However, it will not be sufficient for an applicant to claim merely that the class of goods proposed to be sold cannot be sold from the town centre.

- 3.17 As part of this exercise it is important to explore whether specific parts of a development could be operated from separate, sequentially preferable, sites. For retail and leisure proposals in edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations which comprise a group of retail and/or leisure units, such as a retail park, leisure park or shopping centre, the applicant should consider the degree to which the constituent units within the proposal could be accommodated on more centrally-located sites in accordance with the objectives and policies in this policy statement.
- 3.18 A single retailer or leisure operator should not be expected to split their proposed development into separate sites where flexibility in terms of scale, format, car parking provision and the scope for disaggregation has been demonstrated. It is not the intention of this policy to seek the arbitrary sub-division of proposals. Rather it is to ensure that consideration is given as to whether there are elements which could reasonably and successfully be located on a separate sequentially preferable site or sites. Paragraphs 3.17 and 3.18 do not apply to uses other than retail and leisure proposals.
- 3.19 Where it is argued that otherwise sequentially-preferable sites are not appropriate for the particular development proposed, applicants should provide clear evidence to demonstrate why such sites are not practicable alternatives in terms of:
- Availability: the sites are unavailable now and are unlikely to become available for development within a reasonable period of time (determined on the merits of a particular case). Where such sites become available unexpectedly after receipt of the application the local planning authority should take this into account in their assessment of the application; and
  - Suitability: with due regard to the requirements to demonstrate flexibility (paragraphs 3.15–3.18), the sites are not suitable for the type of development proposed; and
  - Viability: the development would not be viable on these sites.

#### **d) Assessing Impact**

- 3.20 Impact assessments should be undertaken for any application for a main town centre use which would be in an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre location and which is not in accordance with an up-to-date development plan strategy. Where a significant development in a centre, not in accordance with the development plan strategy, would substantially increase the attraction of the centre and could have an impact on other centres, the impact on other centres will also need to be assessed.

- 3.21 In assessing sites, local planning authorities should consider the impact of the proposal on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment area of the proposed development, including the likely cumulative effect of recent permissions, developments under construction and completed developments. The identification of need does not necessarily indicate that there will be no negative impact.
- 3.22 In particular, local planning authorities should consider the impact of the development on the centre or centres likely to be affected, taking account of:
- the extent to which the development would put at risk the spatial planning strategy for the area and the strategy for a particular centre or network of centres, or alter its role in the hierarchy of centres;
  - the likely effect on future public or private sector investment needed to safeguard the vitality and viability of the centre or centres;
  - the likely impact of the proposed development on trade/turnover and on the vitality and viability of existing centres within the catchment area of the proposed development and, where applicable, on the rural economy (an example of a positive impact might be if development results in clawback expenditure from the surrounding area);
  - changes to the range of services provided by centres that could be affected;
  - likely impact on the number of vacant properties in the primary shopping area;
  - potential changes to the quality, attractiveness, physical condition and character of the centre or centres and to its role in the economic and social life of the community; and
  - the implications of proposed leisure and entertainment uses for the evening and night-time economy of the centre (see also paragraph 2.24).
- 3.23 The level of detail and type of evidence and analysis required should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. Impact assessments which address the issues in Paragraph 3.22 above should be provided for all retail and leisure developments over 2,500 square metres gross floorspace, but they may occasionally be necessary for smaller developments, such as those likely to have a significant impact on smaller centres, depending on the relative size and nature of the development in relation to the centre.

### **e) Ensuring Locations are Accessible**

- 3.24 In considering proposed new developments, local planning authorities should consider:
- i) The need for accessibility by a choice of means of transport*
- 3.25 Developments should be accessible by a choice of means of transport, including public transport, walking, cycling, and the car (taking full account of customers' likely travel patterns). In determining whether developments are or will become genuinely accessible, local authorities should assess the distance of proposed developments from existing or

proposed public transport facilities (bus or railway stations and interchanges). Account should also be taken of the frequency and capacity of services, and whether access is easy, safe and convenient for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people. Distances should be measured as actual walking distance rather than as a straight line.

- 3.26 Local planning authorities should assess the extent to which retail, leisure and office developers have tailored their approach to meet the Government's objectives as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13). For example through the preparation of accessibility analyses, transport assessments, travel plans and the promotion of opportunities to reduce car journeys through home delivery services, and contributions to improve access, traffic management and parking.

*ii) The impact on car use, traffic and congestion*

- 3.27 In assessing new developments, local planning authorities should consider:
- whether the proposal would have an impact on the overall distance travelled by car; and
  - the effect on local traffic levels and congestion, after public transport and traffic management measures have been secured.

### **Consider Local Issues and Material Considerations**

- 3.28 As set out in Chapter 2, above, material considerations to be taken into account in assessing planning applications may include:
- physical regeneration;
  - employment<sup>15</sup>;
  - economic growth; and
  - social inclusion.

### **Extensions to Existing Development**

- 3.29 Applications for the extension of existing development in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations may raise specific issues. The impact on existing town centres of the proposed extension should be given particular weight, especially if new and additional classes of goods or services for sale are proposed. In addition, where establishing need is concerned, local planning authorities should establish that the evidence presented on the need for further floorspace relates specifically to the class of goods proposed to be sold. The sequential approach is only a relevant consideration in relation to extensions where the gross floor space of the proposed extension exceeds 200 square metres. This policy relates to development which creates additional floorspace, including proposals for internal

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<sup>15</sup> In the development control context employment considerations should encompass the creation of higher skill opportunities or opportunities that are particularly important given the local labour market.

alterations where planning permission is required, and applies to individual units or stores which may or may not be part of a retail park, mixed use development or shopping centre.

### **Ancillary Uses**

- 3.30 Shops may be proposed as an ancillary element to other forms of development (for example, petrol filling stations, motorway service areas, airport terminals, industrial/employment areas, railway stations, sports stadia or other leisure, tourist and recreational facilities). Local planning authorities should ensure that in such cases the retail element is limited in scale and genuinely ancillary to the main development, and should seek to control this through the use of conditions (see paragraphs 3.31–3.32). Whether a shop is ancillary will be a matter of judgement for the decision maker and will depend on factors such as the scale of development involved, the range of goods sold, and the proportion of turnover from goods sold which are not directly related to the main use. Where the retail element is not considered to be ancillary, it should be subject to the policies set out in this statement, particularly where the development would adversely affect the viability and vitality of a local centre, whether in an urban or a rural area.

### **Using Conditions Effectively**

- 3.31 Local planning authorities should consider using planning conditions to ensure that the character of a development cannot subsequently be changed to create a form of development that the local planning authority would originally have refused. When appropriate, conditions should be used to:
- prevent developments from being sub-divided into a large number of smaller shops or units;
  - ensure that ancillary elements remain ancillary to the main development;
  - limit any internal alterations to increase the amount of gross floorspace by specifying the maximum floorspace permitted (including for example through the addition of mezzanine floors); and
  - limit the range of goods sold, and to control the mix of convenience and comparison goods.
- 3.32 Conditions can also be used by local authorities in seeking to resolve issues relating to the impact of the development on traffic and the amenity of neighbouring residents, such as the timing of the delivery of goods to shops. In considering restrictions on deliveries, local authorities should take account of all relevant factors, including impact on congestion, especially in peak periods. In considering how to mitigate night-time noise, local authorities should consider alternatives to a complete ban, such as embodying codes of practice into planning agreements relating to the number of vehicles and noise standards.

## Chapter 4

# Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 Comprehensive, relevant and up-to-date monitoring is essential to the effective planning and management of town centres. It should be used to inform the review of site allocations and town centre policies and enable early signs of change of town centres to be identified and appropriate action to be taken.
- 4.2 Under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>16</sup> regional planning bodies and local planning authorities are required to submit Annual Monitoring Reports to the Secretary of State. Among the matters which these reports must cover are performance against defined core output indicators and, where policies are not being implemented, the reasons why, and the measures proposed to secure implementation, including through the review of the regional spatial strategy and/or local development documents. Guidance on monitoring is set out in *Monitoring Regional Spatial Strategies* (to be published in revised form by ODPM in 2005), and in *Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide* (ODPM, 2005). The core output indicators for regional spatial strategies and local development frameworks of particular relevance to town centres are:
  - the amount of completed retail, office and leisure development (Indicator 4a); and
  - the percentage of completed office, retail and leisure development in town centres (Indicator 4b).
- 4.3 The following matters should also be kept under regular review:
  - the network and hierarchy of centres (at both the regional and local levels);
  - the need for further development (as set out in Chapter 2); and
  - the vitality and viability of centres (at the local level).

### MEASURING VITALITY AND VIABILITY: HEALTH CHECKS

- 4.4 In order to measure the vitality and viability and monitor the health of their town centres and how this is changing over time, local authorities should regularly collect information, preferably in co-operation with the private sector, on the following key indicators:
  - **diversity of main town centre uses (by number, type and amount of floorspace):** the amount of space in use for different functions – such as offices; shopping; leisure, cultural and entertainment activities; pubs, cafes and restaurants; and, hotels;
  - **the amount of retail, leisure and office floorspace in edge-of-centre and out-of-centre locations;**

<sup>16</sup> Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Regional Planning) (England) Regulations, 2004 and Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004 require the preparation and submission to the Secretary of State of Annual Monitoring Reports.

- **the potential capacity for growth or change of centres in the network:** opportunities for centres to expand or consolidate, typically measured in the amount of land available for new or more intensive forms of town centre development;
- **retailer representation and intentions to change representation:** existence and changes in representation of types of retailer, including street markets, and the demand of retailers wanting to come into the centre, or to change their representation in the centre, or to reduce 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):** 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 (footfall):** a key indicator of the vitality of shopping streets, measured by 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:** 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 and the range of customer origins served; and, the quality of provision for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and the ease of access from main arrival points to the main attractions;
- **customer and residents' views and behaviour:** regular surveys 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 can be used to establish views of both users and non-users of the centre, including the views of residents living in or close to the centre. This information could also establish the degree of linked trips;
- **perception of safety and occurrence of crime:** should include views and information on safety and security, and where appropriate, information for monitoring the evening and night-time economy; and
- **state of the town centre environmental quality:** should include information on problems (such as air pollution, noise, clutter, litter and graffiti) and positive factors (such as trees, landscaping and open spaces).

## Annex A: Typologies

**Table 1: Types of Centre and their main characteristics**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>City</b>     | <p>City centres are the highest level of centre identified in development plans. In terms of hierarchies, they will often be a regional centre and will serve a wide catchment. The centre may be very large, embracing a wide range of activities and may be distinguished by areas which may perform different main functions. Planning for the future of such areas can be achieved successfully through the use of area action plans, with masterplans or development briefs for particular sites.</p> <p>In London the 'international' and 'metropolitan' centres identified in the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy typically perform the role of city centres.</p>  |
| <b>Town</b>     | <p>Town centres will usually be the second level of centres after city centres and, in many cases, they will be the principal centre or centres in a local authority's area. In rural areas they are likely to be market towns and other centres of similar size and role which function as important service centres, providing a range of facilities and services for extensive rural catchment areas. In planning the future of town centres, local planning authorities should consider the function of different parts of the centre and how these contribute to its overall vitality and viability.</p> <p>In London the 'major' and many of the 'district' centres identified in the Mayor's Spatial Development Strategy typically perform the role of town centres.</p> |
| <b>District</b> | <p>District centres will usually comprise groups of shops often containing at least one supermarket or superstore, and a range of non-retail services, such as banks, building societies and restaurants, as well as local public facilities such as a library.</p>  |
| <b>Local</b>    | <p>Local centres include a range of small shops of a local nature, serving a small catchment. Typically, local centres might include, amongst other shops, a small supermarket, a newsagent, a sub-post office and a pharmacy. Other facilities could include a hot-food takeaway and launderette. In rural areas, large villages may perform the role of a local centre.</p>  |

**Footnote to Table 1:**

- (1) Small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance are not regarded as centres for purposes of this policy statement.
- (2) See also paragraph 2.54.

**Table 2: Types of Location**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Town Centre</b> (ie. types of centre identified in Table 1) | Defined area, including the primary shopping area and areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. The extent of the town centre should be defined on the proposals map.   |
| Primary Shopping Area  | Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are contiguous and closely related to the primary shopping frontage). The extent of the primary shopping area should be defined on the proposals map. Smaller centres may not have areas of predominantly leisure, business and other main town centre uses adjacent to the primary shopping area, therefore the town centre may not extend beyond the primary shopping area.   |
| Primary frontage   | Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses.   |
| Secondary frontage   | Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses.  |
| <b>Edge-of-centre</b>  | <p>For retail purposes, a location that is well connected to and within easy walking distance (ie. up to 300 metres) of the primary shopping area.</p> <p>For all other main town centre uses, this is likely to be within 300 metres of a town centre boundary<sup>17</sup>.</p> <p>In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge-of-centre, account should be taken of local circumstances. For example, local topography will affect pedestrians’ perceptions of easy walking distance from the centre. Other considerations include barriers, such as crossing major roads and car parks, the attractiveness and perceived safety of the route and the strength of attraction and size of the town centre. A site will not be well connected to a centre where it is physically separated from it by a barrier such as a major road, railway line or river and there is no existing or proposed pedestrian route which provides safe and convenient access to the centre.</p> |
| <b>Out-of-centre</b>   | A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.   |
| <b>Out-of-town</b>   | An out-of-centre development outside the existing urban area.   |

**Footnote to Table 2:**

For purposes of this policy statement, the “centre” for a retail development constitutes the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses the “centre” should be regarded as the area embraced by the town centre boundary.

<sup>17</sup> For office development, locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange, including railway and bus stations, within the urban area should be considered as edge-of-centre locations for purposes of the sequential approach.

**Table 3: Descriptions of Types of Development**

| <b>RETAIL</b>                              |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Convenience shopping</b>                | Convenience retailing is the provision of everyday essential items, including food, drinks, newspapers/magazines and confectionery.   |
| Supermarkets                               | Self-service stores selling mainly food, with a trading floorspace less than 2,500 square metres, often with car parking.   |
| Superstores                                | 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.                          |
| <b>Comparison shopping</b>                 | Comparison retailing is the provision of items not obtained on a frequent basis. These include clothing, footwear, household and recreational goods.                                      |
| Retail warehouses                          | Large stores specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods), DIY items and other ranges of goods, catering mainly for car-borne customers. |
| Retail parks                               | An agglomeration of at least 3 retail warehouses.   |
| Warehouse clubs                            | Large businesses specialising in volume sales of reduced priced goods. The operator may limit access to businesses, organisations or classes of individual.                               |
| Factory outlet centres                     | Groups of shops specialising in selling seconds and end-of-line goods at discounted prices.   |
| Regional and sub-regional shopping centres | Out-of-centre shopping centres which are generally over 50,000 square metres gross retail area, typically comprising a wide variety of comparison goods stores.                           |
| <b>LEISURE</b>                             |   |
| <b>Leisure parks</b>                       | Leisure parks often feature a mix of leisure facilities, such as a multi-screen cinema, indoor bowling centres, night club, restaurants, bars and fast-food outlets, with car parking.    |
| <b>BUSINESS</b>                            |   |
| <b>Business parks</b>                      | A grouping of purpose-built office accommodation and other business uses with some shared facilities and car parking.   |

## Annex B: Bibliography

Guidance and advice published separately by the Government which is relevant to implementing this planning policy statement includes:

- Assessing Need and Impact of New Retail and Leisure Development (forthcoming)
- Applying the Sequential Approach (forthcoming)
- Strategies for Smaller Centres (forthcoming)
- Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation tools (ODPM, 2005)
- Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access (NRPF/DTLR, 2002)
- By Design: Urban design in the planning system – towards better practice (DETR/CABE, 2000)
- Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide (ODPM, 2003)
- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention (ODPM/Home Office, 2004)
- Good Practice Guidance on Planning for Tourism (forthcoming)

Other documents and advice which may help inform the development of policy and managing town centres include:

- Vital and Viable Town Centres: Meeting the Challenge (DOE, 1994)
- Managing Urban Spaces in Town Centres (DETR/ATCM, 1997)
- Town Centre Partnerships (DETR/ATCM, 1997)
- Investing in the High Street (DETR/Civic Trust, 1999)

