



Local Government Association

“Retailing out of recession – the challenges ahead”

**National Retail Planning Forum
Birmingham 19th July 2009**

Councillor Mike Haines

Deputy Chair LGA Environment Board

Planning PH Teignbridge DC (S Devon)

promoting better local government

Role of LGA

The Local Government Association (LGA) represents over 400 local authorities in England and Wales. They, in turn, represent over 50 million people, spending over £74 billion each year on local services

Responses to PPS 6 consultation, an illustrative example

Question 2: Does the scope of the new impact test achieve the right balance and is it robust enough to thoroughly test the positive and negative impacts of development outside town centres?

- **22% of planning authorities**, 30% of professional bodies and 40% of developers said 'yes'
- 100% of NGOs, 80% of trade bodies and 60% of consultants said 'yes with reservations' and
- **22% of planning authorities**, 50% of professional bodies and 83% of local amenity groups said 'no'

concerns were expressed that the complexity of the test, by requiring an increased local evidence base, could cause capacity, skills and resource issues for local planning authorities, resulting in delays to planning applications.

Some retail issues welcomed

Maintaining a commitment to strong town centres which should not be lost through the merging of the documents; looking at the impact test in an holistic way and encouraging competitiveness and diversity

The retention of the 'needs' test at the development plan stage provides an element of certainty and enables planning to be undertaken in an integrated manner, taking into account socio-economic change over the plan period and ensures a plan led process.

Some retail areas of concern / clarification

Removal of the needs test may encourage more out of centre retail proposals. Such large-scale proposals tend to cater mainly for car borne access. Having regard to the government's aim of reducing reliance on the private car, clarification would be helpful on how such proposals would be justified in the absence of demonstrated need.

Developers may feel encouraged to bypass the plan making process and pursue development through planning applications, undermining the plan led process