retail FORUM

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Market opportunities

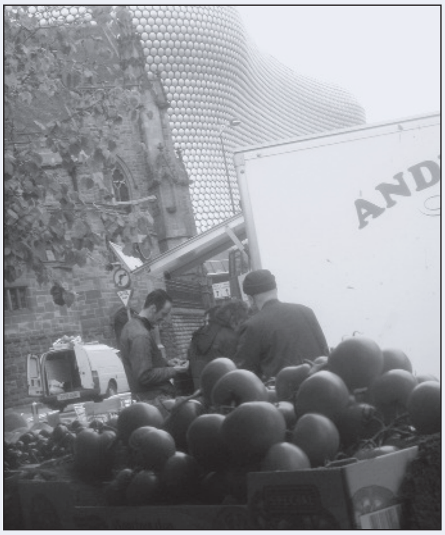
Markets can add excitement and variety to the wider retail offer, and they merit a place in the modern retail hierarchy, says NRPF Secretary George Nicholson

One thing that is not always understood by those in the retail industry, and is often ignored by policy-makers, is that there is a continuous thread connecting the free-standing stall on a street market to the largest regional shopping centre. This is odd, given the historical development of retail giants such as Marks & Spencer and Morrisons, to name two well known examples. Another flaw is a tendency to segment things into discrete niches. This stems partly from the need to help make things manageable in terms of information gathering or understanding. Concepts such as 'prime' and 'secondary' locations are also used in a very sloppy way.

Add to all this the dubious logic behind the 'Clone Towns' campaign and you can see why developing a true picture of what is actually going on – or what we should be seeking to achieve – is so difficult. The result of this approach is nearly always a partial and skewed view and, worse, a lack of understanding of the inter-dependency that exists between the different strands of retailing.

Nowhere is this confusion more pronounced than in the closed world of retail markets. Indeed, from the inside it often feels like a lost world, while on the outside it seems utterly impenetrable. I say this as someone with a foot in both camps – as Secretary to the NRPF and also having been intimately involved in the development of the Borough Market in Central London in recent years.

There are two principal problems that need to be addressed: raising the profile of retail markets (in effect putting them on the retail radar map); and getting local authorities and others involved in running markets to see themselves as part of the bigger retail picture. Both require a quantum leap in imagination by those currently involved.



Things are likely to change if only because the development industry is gearing up to replace the worn-out or tired shopping centres that were built in the 1970s 'Arndale era'. During that period, numerous historic markets disappeared, only to re-emerge – often in badly designed spaces – inside the new centres. Later centres dispensed with a food offer altogether. This time around, there is an opportunity to see retail markets located and designed in a way that enables them to function properly. Markets have the potential to add some excitement and variety to the wider retail offer. The best of the UK's markets are already 'trading up' so that they offer a level of quality – particularly in the food offer – that can compete with, if not better, the supermarkets.

But the message to everyone involved in markets – public and private – is that

Above: Borough Market. Left: Birmingham Market with Selfridges in the background

you have to *want* to run a market to make a success of one. Far too many operators are presiding over decline, either by running them as a public service or as a result of a planning condition. Neither approach will deliver the type of market that will attract today's shoppers. As the best of the markets in the UK, on mainland Europe and elsewhere have shown, it is possible for markets to take their rightful place in the modern retail hierarchy. ■

■ **For more information on UK markets visit the National Association of British Market Authorities website at www.Nabma.org**

New definitions for retail planning

Jonathan Baldock, Head of Retail Planning at DTZ, describes a new initiative to promote consistency in retail planning data

Until about the mid-1990s, the Unit for Retail Planning Information (URPI) was the accepted central source for a range of retail planning information. This included definitions on which data was based, as well as the data itself. URPI was taken over in the mid-1990s by MapInfo Ltd, which no longer published as wide a range of definitions and standards for retail planning data.

Other companies, in particular Experian Goad, Mintel, Verdict Research and the Institute of Grocery Distribution, provide a range of specialist retail data. However, experience shows that there are differences in the definitions used by different data suppliers.

There would be significant advantages for retail planning, benefiting local planning authorities and the private sector, if a new set of definitions was prepared and widely adopted by data suppliers and users. The NRPF is ideally placed to publish and maintain these definitions on behalf of its members and data users generally. Such definitions would need to take account of international and national standards. The most important definitions are likely to be:

- *Population definitions:* These should indicate the basis on which population estimates and forecasts are prepared, for example trend based, migration based, policy based.
- *Goods and expenditure definitions*: There are significant differences between the definitions used by the main suppliers for retail expenditure data for the sub-categories of comparison goods.
- *Floorspace definitions:* The definition of net sales area varies from retailer to retailer, which means that retailers' sales densities are not calculated on a consistent basis; and it is possible to arrive at erroneous retail capacity forecasts by applying sales densities calculated according to one definition to floorspace based on a different definition. In addition, a variety of terms are used by architects and letting agents to describe new retail development, including 'gross lettable area', 'net lettable area', 'net internal area', etc. These are often not defined, and bear little relationship to 'gross retail floorspace' or 'net sales area' as used by retail planners.
- *Sales density definitions:* These should be based on the floorspace definitions, and should indicate whether trade (i.e. non-retail) sales are included or excluded, price basis, year of measurement, etc.

The NRPF is therefore taking a lead in formulating such definitions, publishing them and promoting their use to retailers, data suppliers and data users. A working group of industry representatives is being convened to agree common definitions. These will then be published by the NRPF and promoted to retailers, the planning profession and the development industry.

It is expected that the first new definitions will be published during 2008. This process is being encouraged by the Communities and Local Government department and will also feed into the review of PPS6. The NRPF believes that this will be a significant step forward in improving the quality of retail forecasting, and in improving planning and development decisions based upon it. ■

The Competition Commission released the provisional findings of its review of the groceries market at the end of October, to much public interest. Resulting from the third such inquiry in seven years, the report is substantial, measuring up at 270 pages long – nearer 900 once appendices are included.

Of course not everyone was going to be pleased; indeed, it is rumoured that one measure of success for Commission insiders is that no-one should be happy. The demands of some of the more vocal critics were always going to lie beyond the remit of the review and its definition of consumer benefit: *'We are not the commission for small business or the commission for food producers,'* the Commission Chairman Peter Freeman told the *Daily Telegraph* back in January. The general verdict seems to have been that the report is a damp squib – but it does have some important implications for retail planning.

Findings

In essence the review found that although the large supermarkets sector was dominated by the 'big four', customers were generally well served. Access to a choice of different large stores in an area is important for competition; but in many places the Commission found insufficient choice in the local area, evidenced by higher profits in those stores.

For smaller stores, the convenience sector was found to be dynamic, with a growth in independents. Interestingly, the impact on high street specialist shops of the supermarket chains moving into the convenience sector was shown to be mixed: detrimental to greengrocers, beneficial to bakers entering, and neutral for most other grocery outlets.

A key area of concern was barriers to market entry by competing stores. The review noted that the purpose of the retail planning system is to control and shape retail development to meet a range of objectives, and that an inevitable consequence is that it will act to some degree as a barrier to local market entry or expansion of larger stores, in that grocery retailers are not able to open a new larger grocery store in any location of their choice.

There was concern that the planning system was unintentionally creating

Referee to consult on score draw

Miles Davis and **George Nicholson** take a look at the provisional findings of Competition Commission's investigation into the groceries market

barriers to entry or expansion not necessary for its overall policy objectives, and that the PPS6 requirement to demonstrate need for out-of-centre and edge-of-centre sites was limiting the development of large stores on such sites, and instead favoured mid-sized grocery and convenience stores which could use smaller town centre sites. The substantial costs and risks for applicants seeking planning permission for larger grocery stores – particularly developments outside existing centres – were deemed to favour national retailers who already had experience of working with the planning process, over smaller retailers or new entrants to the UK retail groceries market.

However, the rate of growth in the number of larger stores over the past five years was found to be in line with historical averages.

Little evidence of grocery retailers using the planning system to frustrate entry by their competitors was found, but controlled land-holdings, including the use of restrictive covenants, were found to be impeding entry in areas where there was already a high concentration of grocery retailers.

Remedies

At this stage in the review process, debate on the findings is effectively over, and attention turns to remedies proposed to correct the problems identified. With the remedies having been open for comment until 23 November, hearings will take place into early 2008, with a final report due by the 8 May statutory deadline.

As far as retail planning is concerned, the Commission is considering recommending changes to the planning system that would facilitate greater availability of land for development outside the town centre, possibly by distinguishing edge-of-centre sites from out-of-centre sites to recognise that edge-of-centre stores can benefit the town centre. Views are invited on the extent to which an amended test should recognise quantitative and qualitative aspects of need.

To streamline the retail planning process, the abolition of one or more of the current tests is suggested – views are invited as to which.

Competition test

A new 'competition test' is also proposed. This could either be a requirement before a planning application for a grocery retail store could be submitted, or else planning officers and local authority planning committees could take account of the effect on competition of a proposed scheme in their decision on whether to grant consent.

If the test is applied before submitting an application, there are further questions:

- To whom should the test apply? All grocery retailers or just some, and if so, which ones? Should this test also apply to developers proposing a grocery retail store in a planned development?
- How should such a test be framed? For example, would a particular retailer only be permitted to submit a planning application for a grocery retail store if the planned store would not result in its acquiring more than a certain percentage of the market in a given local area? This leads to questions of how the percentage should be measured, what the cut-off level should be, and how local area should be defined.

Alternatively, if competition is considered when granting consent, how would it be taken into account? Should there be a fairly mechanistic test such as a fascia count and/or shares of net floorspace in a particular local area; or should competition be included in a list of factors to which local planning authorities should have regard?

In either case, there is also a question of who would be best placed to apply such a test. The Office of Fair Trading is suggested for a pre-application test, and either local planning authorities themselves or a specialist body such as the OFT if the test is part of the consent decision. The status of such a specialist body and its involvement in the appeals process would need to be resolved. Whoever applies the test will need resourcing.

The Commission is considering recommending the granting of fascia-specific consents or the imposition of fascia-specific restrictions, i.e. consent for a grocery retail store operated by a particular retailer, or consent with a restriction that a particular retailer does not operate from the store.

These proposals are made from a competition perspective; the Commission does acknowledge possible tension with the wider objectives of the planning system. Some proposals, such as the streamlining of the various tests, align closely the 'super-test' proposals in the Planning White Paper and the PPS6 review process. The other proposals will certainly be taken into account in the revision of PPS6. ■

__Miles Davis__ is a PhD student at the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis (CASA) at University College London, and __George Nicholson__ is Secretary to the NRPF.

RETAIL-LED REGENERATION – vision, persistence, and luck!

NRPF Secretary George Nicholson on the power of retail development as a key driver in regeneration

'There are two types of forecasters – those who don't know and those who don't know they don't know.'
JK Galbraith

It barely seems credible now that there was once a time when city centre residential development was not considered a desirable objective. But in the 1970s and 1980s, that was precisely the considered view among both the political class and the development industry. Indeed, when as Chairman of the GLC Planning Committee I toured most of the major cities in the UK to promote what we were doing in Central London, most of those questioned about the desirability of city centre living thought I was completely mad. Interestingly, each city in turn claimed to have the second most successful Marks & Spencer's outside Oxford Street. While the amount of commercial office development in the pipeline was then the main barometer of success, retailing was undoubtedly another key indicator.

Some 20 years later, I found myself in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), again talking about the future of 'The City'. It is a fascinating time to be in India. This March, Park Street – in the centre of Kolkata – saw McDonalds open the doors to its first restaurant in the city. The same month, the British Deputy High Commission was hosting a regeneration seminar at the Park Hotel, just down the street, headed up by a team of UK experts – including speakers from Grosvenor, Benoy, Greig & Stephenson, and English Heritage.

As well as leading the delegation, my role was to make a presentation on the refurbishment of the OXO Tower and Borough Market in Central London (of which more later), both of which I have been intimately involved in, and both of which, given what is happening in Kolkata's markets and on its waterfront, have immediate lessons for the city.

Liverpool and the Kolkata waterfront – both cities are seeing a huge amount of new development

Many people may not be aware that Kolkata even has a waterfront. But in fact a series of imaginatively crafted parks and a growing collection of refurbished colonial buildings have started to transform what was until ten years ago an almost totally derelict stretch of docks in the very heart of the city. Add to this the start, on a site immediately adjacent to the waterfront, of a mammoth new shopping mall of over 50,000 square metres in the former headquarters of one of Kolkata's oldest tea firms (Williamson Magor), led by a design team from Benoy, and it is clear that something is stirring after years of stagnation.

In many ways there are echoes in Liverpool of what has happened to Kolkata, which is why the presentation by Guy Butler from Grosvenor, on their giant Paradise Street project, was of such interest in the city. I can vividly remember, as a young apprentice ships engineer in Liverpool in the 1960s, when shopping in Bold Street was almost the equivalent to London's Bond Street. The city, then in the top five shopping destinations in the country, later dropped out of the listings all together in the 1980s and 1990s. The Grosvenor scheme will, it is predicted, almost single handedly return the city to its previous glory – although Land Securities, the owners of the hopelessly dated St John's centre opposite Lime Street station, are also gearing up to play their part in the city's revival.

The two cities, Kolkata and Liverpool then, have many things in common. Both were major centres of shipping, trade, industry and commerce. Both have struggled to find a new role after years of political and economic upheaval. Both are currently seeing a huge amount of new development, much of it on the back of a retail-led boom.

Indeed, if any further proof were needed, Liverpool and Kolkata are testament to the power of retail development as one of the key drivers in regeneration. For all the other criteria that various surveys promote, from live-ability to love-ability, success in retail terms is now probably the best barometer of how a city is perceived. And with something like 54 million square feet of additional shopping centre floorspace in the pipeline between now and 2012, there is little sign that the pace of development is set to change.

But new ideas as to what sort of retail experience people will demand are starting to emerge in response to the challenge of the internet. As speaker after speaker at the Retail Property Directors Forum, staged by *Retail Week* in London earlier this year stressed, the shopping experience is moving from one of merely acquiring assets, to one where perceptions and experiences of a place as a destination are becoming paramount, in the competition for people's time and money. Which is what makes the OXO Tower and Borough Market in London such interesting projects to have been involved in.

People now take a stroll along London's South Bank for granted. But in the mid-1980s the area was as run down and derelict as any industrial northern city. No-one went there (unless they lived there), let alone shopped there. Gabriel's Wharf, with its collection of converted garages-cum-shops, was a first small step, and the OXO Tower, with its focus on designer makers, shops and studios, along with the Harvey Nichols roof-top restaurant, another that started to change people's perceptions of the area from a run-down fringe office location with a few cultural oases such as the National Theatre and the Festival Hall, to the 'must-visit' place in London.

Of course, the later developments of the Millennium Wheel, Tate Modern and the Globe Theatre are also key draws, but it was the single-minded vision of the area first brought to bear by Coin Street Community Builders that provided the catalyst for much of what has happened.

Just as with the development of the OXO Tower some ten years earlier, Borough Market was not an obvious choice as a location for a new quality food market. From financial basket case to one of the most successful and best known food retail markets in the world in just over ten years isn't bad going; but it was anything but inevitable. Given that the rapidly shrinking wholesale market was leaking money badly, food seemed the problem rather than the solution.

It was the arrival of Neil's Yard Dairy, looking for a place to store cheese, and a Spanish importer Brindisa, housed in some workshops constructed by the former GLC adjacent to the Market, that provided the seeds of an idea. Reviving the concept of 'London's Larder', the long forgotten name for the area in its heyday, as a centre for world trade, based around the docks, was another. The clear focus on quality – 'trading up' in modern parlance – was the final piece of the jigsaw, along with a large dose of bloody mindedness and of course that under-researched thing called luck.

Space doesn't allow a fuller explanation, but my work in setting up the NRPF is precisely to create a knowledge base where at least we can retain some memory of what has happened – good and bad. As the last 30 years have shown, little was obvious, but mistakes could have been avoided, and undoubtedly better schemes could have been developed with a little more thought. Certainly the future is going to be even more challenging. ■

■ ***This article first appeared in the British Urban Regeneration Association Journal.***

Retail planning's online one-stop shop

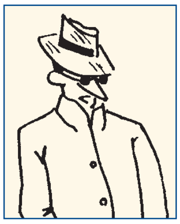
The NRPF website – www.nrpf.org – continues to go from strength to strength. News items, articles and links to other relevant websites are added frequently, so it's worth checking back to find out what's happening in the world of retail planning.

It's also the place to access our Knowledge Base – the unique resource for retail planners comprising a comprehensive Bibliography with commentary, a web links directory, our Planner's Bookshelf list of recommended reading, and our expanding series of Briefing Notes. These notes provide a quick and easy way to find out what (and who) you need to know about particular hot retail planning topics – the most recent covers the sequential approach.

Even better, this rich retail planning resource is completely free to access! ■

Snooper – *Retail Forum's* roving reporter and sampler of retail environments – on local design and un-cloning the clones

Designing for clones



If the 'clone thing' is both true and to be tackled, then design – probably with a small 'd' – will have to be part of the solution. The 'little mall' is evident throughout the country, and what a sad little thing it mostly is. While convenient as a vehicle for marginal investment and itsy-bitsy units for big boys and some local go-getters, it is not doing a really useful job for un-cloning the clones.

For this, of course, all the merits of large boxes and multi-national chains need to be challenged, equalled and exceeded by a new 'product'. This has to include good local business acumen, of course, but would be greatly helped by a review of national property law and practice to unclog the lease and tenant scenes. Even then, the public will not respond unless the new little mall and reinvigorated high streets are ***attractive***.

It isn't just architects having mini-visions. It is the community too. The new malls cannot be only retail. Like all retail centres, they have to be community hearts. Nice to be in. On the go. Up-to-date in culture – lifestyles – and products. Funding by the community will be essential, just as it is in the high street. Public and private partnership, and management by both. And of course, all on a shoe string!

This is what local design must be about. All clones were once idiosyncratic, socially connected, welcoming. The new designs cannot be otherwise. Designers, go for it! ■

PS What about some prizes?

Supermarkets and planning regulation – an economic perspective

Rachel Griffith and Heike Harmgart of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and University College London report on their study of the impact of planning regulations on market structures in grocery retailing

The UK retail sector has been the focus of academic interest and policy concern because of its relatively low productivity growth, high prices and concentrated market structure. Attention has focused on land use regulation as one of the root causes of this poor performance, and in particular the regulations introduced in the mid-1990s which severely restricted building large-scale out-of-town supermarkets. Yet there is relatively little empirical evidence on the impact or cost of land use regulation.

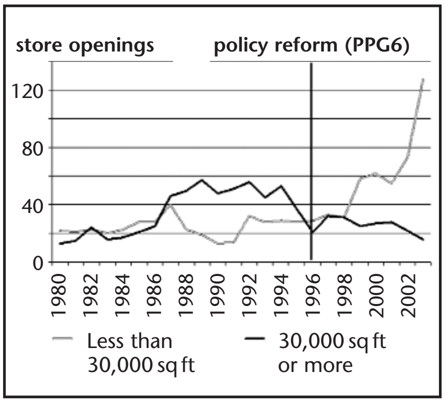
The impact of planning policy on new store openings

Work commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has compared entry rates before and after the reform (as shown in the graph) and suggested that land use regulation has had a large impact on market entry of new large stores. Before the major reform in 1996 approximately similar numbers of small and large stores were opened; after the reforms there was a rapid rise in the number of smaller-format stores opened.

Is planning policy the only cause of change?

There are potential problems in before and after comparisons, as is well known in the literature. This places emphasis on the importance of identifying correctly what would have happened in the absence of the planning reforms. Other factors have also affected the shift towards smaller store formats – for example Tesco's move into the small 'Express' and 'Metro' format and Sainsbury's move into the 'Local' format were at least in part due to changing consumer preferences and company strategy. A report by CB Hillier Parker for the ODPM notes that *'food retailers are changing their store formats and focusing more on town centre and edge of centre sites; this has been as much due to commercial considerations as to [planning regulations]'*.[1]

In our study we consider the impact that planning regulation has had on market structure in the UK supermarket industry, taking into account these other factors, and thus are able to say something about the true cost of regulation. Without taking these other factors into account we might incorrectly attribute other contemporaneous changes to the regulatory reforms.



Supermarket store openings in the UK by the 'big four' (Asda, Sainsbury, Safeway/Morrison, Tesco), by size. Based on authors' calculations using IGD

Unfortunately, we cannot observe a world where planning regulations were not implemented. Instead, we use economic theory to impose a structure on the problem, and we use variation in the way that the regulations were implemented across local authorities, which allows us to identify the effect of regulation on market outcomes.

We rely on standard economic models of behaviour in which consumers shop for the bulk of groceries in 'one-stop' and the residual in a 'top-up' shop. We use information on the geographic concentration of economic activity in town centres in the UK to define local markets.

Planning regulation is significant, but other factors are important too

Among other things, our findings suggest the following:

- If we do not account for variation in demographic factors and observable fixed cost drivers, then the implied effect of planning regulations is over twice as large as when we take these factors into account.
- Planning regulation did have a statistically significant impact on market equilibrium outcomes, and it has represented an entry barrier.
- When we do take demographic factors into account, we find that a percentage increase in the approval rate of planning applications has the opposite effect to a percentage increase in the unemployment rate, but with similar magnitude.

In ongoing research we are trying to quantify the cost of planning regulation by looking at how prices vary across markets with different equilibrium number of stores.

The analysis contained in this paper was funded by the ESRC/EPSRC Advanced Institute of Management Research (AIM) and the ESRC Centre at the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

1 *Policy Evaluation of the Effectiveness of PPG6.* CB Hillier Parker and Cardiff University, for ODPM, 2004

A glimpse into the future

Miles Davis **looks at some of the results from the research programme on the future of retail property undertaken by the BCSC**

As previously featured in *Retail Forum*, the British Council of Shopping Centres (BCSC) has recently completed an extensive research programme looking at the future of retail property, with the aim of examining the full scope and impact of retail property trends over the next ten years.

The research is designed to inform retailers, developers, investors and policy-makers on how likely trends may affect a wide range of factors in the industry, including the conception and design of new projects, planning, development, tenant mix strategies, leasing, marketing, and asset management. It represents the most comprehensive retail property overview ever to be undertaken.

The results of the nine strands of research are available from the BCSC website. In a tenth report, Dr Richard Barkham, Group Research Director at Grosvenor and programme manager for the research, critically appraises the results of the individual strands and sets out BCSC's interpretation of the results. At a recent presentation to the NRPF Research Group, Dr Barkham elaborated further, with some interesting findings for retail planners, which we thought were worth sharing:

- There are currently 4,600 shopping locations, i.e. places having more than 30 regular shoppers.
- Retail property is an important asset: it comprises 65% of pension fund assets. Since 1975 retail rents have risen by 20% in real terms; the figure is even higher for prime retail. At the same time office and industrial rents have fallen in real terms. Inevitably this provokes a sector response towards increasing scale and efficiency.
- More floorspace is needed. Experian calculates that an additional 6.1 million square metres of retail space will be needed in the next ten years; 5.6 million square metres are already in the development pipeline, but remember that some of this will replace existing shops which will be demolished in the development process. The gap between supply and demand is not uniform across the country.
- The retail sector continues to enjoy remarkably good health. There has been 94% real growth in retail since 1986 and, despite press reports of tightening margins, employment in the sector continues to grow.
- Growth in retail spending will continue. Disposable income as a share of GDP has been falling since the mid-1990s and personal debt may have reached a limit, so the rate of growth is likely to be slower than it has been over the last 40 years. Even so, retail spending growth will continue to outpace national economic growth, especially for comparison goods.
- The structure of the population will change significantly. Society as a whole is ageing and the number of over 45s will increase by 3.6 million in ten years – 2.2 million of those being over 55. Immigration is also replenishing the younger age bands more likely to favour 'mass acquisition'. But attitudes are often linked to particular generations rather than age – it cannot be assumed that today's 55 year olds will adopt the shopping habits of today's 65 year olds in ten years' time. In fact, a large growth is predicted in spending by the over 45s, which could be good news for the mid-market high street offer, but retail will have to compete with demand for services and experiences. Shopping places have traditionally been designed to target 25-44 year old females; in future retail will have to focus on different consumer segments and how they are changing in order to satisfy people's needs and expectations.
- The trend for out-of-town development has been reversed, but achieving this has been slow, and it would be very easy for the floodgates to open once again. Even though the proportion of development occurring in town centres is increasing, it is still a minority.
- The news for small and medium-sized towns is mixed: 64% of pipeline development will occur around them, but the majority of this is retail parks or superstores, rather than town centre development. They are also under threat from bigger centres, where the premium retailers are concentrating – these are having much more of an impact than regional out-of-town shopping centres. In smaller centres, the big grocers have greatly increased their market penetration into traditional comparison goods such as health, electrical, clothing, footwear and entertainment.
- The impact of the internet is still uncertain. Multi-channel retail seems

continued overleaf...

New planning policy for economic development

The planning policy guidance on economic development (PPG4) is scheduled for review, with a new draft planning policy statement (PPS) to be published for consultation shortly. With the importance of retail in regeneration being increasingly recognised (as several articles in this edition of the newsletter demonstrate), this new planning policy statement will be of interest to retail planners – so keep a look out.

continued...
to be successful, with stores such as John Lewis making the leap into online and mail order while also opening new shops, while companies such as Blooming Marvellous and The White Company have moved from the web and mail order to having a presence on the high street. Research from the United States suggests a correlation between petrol prices and online shopping.

- The private car will still dominate in the medium term. Although the cost of motoring will increase and public transport usage for shopping trips will rise, the car will still be the main mode of transport, and shoppers will continue to demand more parking. For sustainability, a realistic approach needs to be taken to accommodating the car in town or shopping centres; otherwise shoppers will simply drive further afield. A co-ordinated approach to transport policy which does not penalise town centres would help here.
- Retailers will continue to evolve. There will be a continuing drive for size, both of individual stores and of businesses and the economies of scale that will bring. There will also be more speciality formats, except perhaps in food. There will be a move to value leadership rather than cost leadership. The trend of internationalisation will continue in both directions, with overseas retailers drawn to the UK and home-grown retailers successfully exporting their formats. The decline of independents is unlikely to be stemmed; it should be noted that they are not always very good at retailing, but the multiples of tomorrow will grow from the most successful independents of today.
- The appearance of shopping places will change. Although the renewal of retail stock occurs at a rate of 1% per annum, shop refits tend to run on cycles of around five years, so design is important, taking account of changes such as the green agenda. At a larger scale, developers are increasingly recognising the importance of making places rather than just clones. ■

- **Summaries of all the research reports and more details are available on the Future of Retail Planning website at www.bcsc.org.uk/research/FORP/ index.htm. The full reports can also be obtained there.**

Roll up! Roll up! For the NRPF Biennial Review

Two years ago, we celebrated our first ten years by holding an event looking towards the next ten years of retail planning policy. It was a resounding success. Plenty has happened since then, with a new Prime Minister, the Planning White Paper, the Barker Review (and Stern and Eddington too), the Competition Commission report and more; so we've revisited the winning format and organised a day taking a look at these changes and how they might impact retail planning in future.

Keynote speakers Professor Leigh Sparks of Stirling University's Institute for Retail Studies and Andrew Smith of Goodman UK head a line-up including Mario Wolf from the DCLG, John Burton from Westfield, and Mark Thurstain-Goodwin of Geofutures, plus there will a panel debate drawing on the private, public and NGO sectors. The event will be held at Local Government House in Westminster on 27 November – see **www.nrpf.org** or contact George Nicholson (e: Gnicho6499@aol.com, t: 020 7633 0903) to book a place. There will be a report in the next issue of this newsletter.

Under-served Markets Project

Tony Rich on the USM *Retail and Regeneration* guide

On 31 October John Healey, Minister for Local Government, launched the *Under-served Markets: Retail and Regeneration* guide. It provides advice to local authorities and their private sector partners on maximising the regeneration benefits of retail investment in deprived areas. The guide reflects learning from the Under-served Markets (USM) project, launched in 2003 by Business in the Community and the ODPM to promote retail investment in England's most deprived communities.

As well as giving advice on investing in under-served markets, the guide also includes tips on strengthening the links between local authority planning and regeneration functions and on devising a strategy to maximise regeneration benefits (including employment and enterprise support) for deprived areas. Importantly, it also addresses the challenges surrounding investment and the implementation of national planning policy, noting that deprived areas are not limited to town centres.

The USM approach was put into practice through pilot developments. One opened in the summer of 2007 in Failsworth, Oldham, where a partnership between the local council and Tesco led to a new store that not only created 350 new jobs (many going to long-term unemployed people), but has served as a catalyst for new housing and small retail investment.

The key messages of the project are now being spread more widely through a programme of regional workshops for invited audiences of planners, regeneration practitioners, retailers and developers, hosted by the Government Regional Offices and running from November until end of March 2008.

The NRPF was the sponsor of the first workshop in November 2006 (see **www.nrpf.org/USM_event.htm** for workshop papers) and as a USM project partner will be providing summaries of the upcoming workshops. ■

__Tony Rich__, of Rich Regeneration, has been contracted to work on the USM project. He was responsible for co-writing the USM guide and is helping to plan the series of follow-up workshops. Under-served Markets: Retail and Regeneration can be downloaded from www.scscreate.com/ bitc/BITC%20USM%20Brochure.pdf or contact Bill Boler at Business in the Community (0870 600482).

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