

Planning White Paper  
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**A Question of Need**

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# The policy evolution

- What is NRPF? Giving decision makers the tools for the job.
- Planning Policy Guidance – a developing story – GLDP - SE Guidance – PPG3
- Retail Policy development – 1977 – 2007, From de-centralisation to re-centralisation and from a Retail Policy to a Town Centre Policy.

# The policy evolution

- 1977 - Gov't circular on Planning for large stores. Response to LA's refusing applications for large new stores.
- 1985 - Concerns first raised in HoC about the effect of Out of Centre development on town centres. Vitality & Viability first appears
- 1987 – 1990 – 18 major inquiries into proposals for Regional Shopping Centres - decentralisation.
- 1988 – First PPG6 – “**Major Retail Development**” - emphasis on permitting market to function effectively. Role of Out of Town clearly identified and sanctioned. “Planning should not inhibit competition”
- 1993 - PPG6 - 1<sup>st</sup> revision, “**Town Centres and Retail Development**” - seeking a more balanced approach between Out of Centre and TC, but one still facilitating competition.

# The policy evolution

- 1996 – PPG6 – second revision “**Town Centres and Retail Development**” – very controversial – Interventionist; Plan led; 3 key tests for assessing retail development relating to Impact & Accessibility. Sequential Approach to development; Town Centre first policy established.
- The new lexicon - “Edge of Centre”; “Suitable”; “Available”. Inconsistency of application – the need for further “Guidance” and the importance of clearer definitions emerges as an issue.
- 2005 – PPG6 - third revision “**Planning For Town Centres**” – Positive planning, promoting growth and managing change + Paragraphs on markets & primary and secondary shopping.

# A question of need

- 1996 - PPG6 clear that need is an issue at the plan making stage when deciding to allocate sites , but less clear as to its relevance at application stage.
- 1999 – “Clarification” by Caborn Statement to HoC – Need is a relevant consideration at application stage for proposals outside existing centres and not included in up to date plans. No definition of need - Relevant factors to be decided by decision maker. Wide variations.

# A question of need

- **2005 revised PPG 6 – Chapter 2 “A plan led approach” – 14 pages** - Promoting Growth; Managing Change; Networks and Hierarchies; A pro-active Plan led System; role of plans; assessing need (quantitative & qualitative), allocating sites, scale, sequential approach, impact, accessibility, other relevant matters eg regeneration.
- **Chapter 3 “Development Control” – 7 pages** - assessing proposed developments, assessing need, scale, sequential approach, impact, accessibility, extensions, conditions.
- Guidance on undertaking assessments of; need; impact and the sequential approach (the “**daughter documents**”) to be published separately – still outstanding

# A question of need

- 2007 – **Planning for a sustainable future – The White Paper** – “Improving the effectiveness of Town Centre Planning Policy” ( 20% - 41% of Development in TC).
- The need for robust, evidence based **up to date plans**, based on a clear understanding of both **need and demand** for new facilities
- Replace current need and impact tests with a **new “super test”** which has a strong focus on town centre first policy and **which promotes competition and improves consumer choice.**

# What Next?

- DCLG Stakeholder meetings
- Draft “super test” released at the end of the summer
- Revised PPS6 - 3 months consultation
- CC Inquiry results
- Autumn Workshops on Guidance Notes
- Spring 2008 – Final version of PPS6 released.”

# The super test

- “Some key issues”
- transparent; robust; encourage level playing field; promote competition and consumer choice; impact & need, social considerations; based on understanding of economics of retailing; accessibility and scale; wider benefits eg regeneration & employment; carbon footprint etc.
- What indicators and data are required?
- Consolidate tests?