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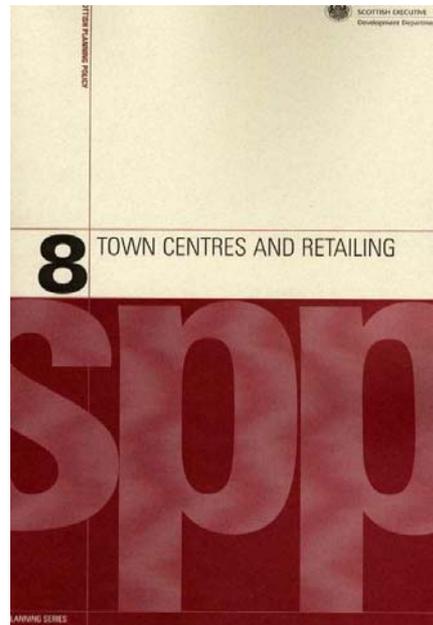
**The Retail Planning Knowledge Base
Briefing Paper 6**

Scottish Retail Planning Policy

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Scottish Retail Planning Policy



It is often simply assumed by retailers and others (including some academics and consultancies) that planning guidance and policy for retailing is UK based. This has of course never been true and is even less true following the (re)establishment of the Scottish Parliament. Whilst there are similarities between planning guidance in Scotland and elsewhere in the UK, there are also distinctions. The latest planning policy for retailing in Scotland was published in August 2006 and is the subject of this briefing note.

The publication of the new Scottish planning statement SPP8 in August 2006 followed an evaluation of the effectiveness of the previous guidance (National Planning Policy Guidance 8) and consideration of retail development data collected and published regularly by the Scottish Executive. A draft policy was prepared and put out for consultation. Responses were received from a range of interested parties. Many were incorporated into the final policy statement. The policy is set within the framework of broader planning reforms contained in the Planning etc. (Scotland) Bill which was passed in November 2006 and includes the necessary statutory legislation for BIDs in Scotland

SPP8: Key Points

Scottish and English policy statements are both pro-active and plan-led in their approach. They are both concerned that town centres should be the main focus and locus of retail development. In both, the mix of town centre uses is emphasised as being important to vitality and viability, with the policy extending beyond retail uses. Equally both continue to use the framework of sequential sites.

The documents look and feel different however, with a much shorter and more succinct document in Scotland. The tenor of the policies also differ. The Scottish policy is less prescriptive and is geared to accommodating local circumstances to a greater extent. Concepts such as sustainability, accessibility and 'need' are also differently interpreted with a greater emphasis on economic growth and opportunity.

Key Principles of SPP8

- Identification of a network of centres
- Focus development in town centres
- Improving town centres
- Providing a safe and attractive environment
- Enhancing accessibility
- Monitoring and review

New features

- Network of centres
- Commercial Centres
- Design
- Accessibility (transport, social justice and economic)

The inclusion of the category 'Commercial centres' represents a new step in the sequential approach. Commercial centres are defined as having a 'more specific focus than town centres on retailing and leisure uses. Examples include out-of-centre shopping centres, commercial leisure developments, mixed retail/leisure developments, retail parks and factory outlet centres' (p.2). These would be identified in the establishment of the network of centres as part of the development plan process. In terms of the sequential approach the order of preference for development is town centre sites, edge of centre sites, other commercial centres identified within the development plan and then out of centre sites in locations that are, or can be, made easily accessible by a choice of modes of transport (p.5). Space-expansive displays of bulky goods are encouraged in town centres but if other locations can be shown to have qualitative benefits to the customer they can be considered. This deviates from PPS6 in England.

A project has been commissioned by the Scottish Executive to work out an evaluation scheme which will be fit for purpose. This will study the collection of key information on the performance of town centres and the provision of consistent and comparable data enabling better evaluation of policy effectiveness and good practice. This is being undertaken by Hargest & Wallace and Donaldsons.

Key Publications

1. Scottish Executive Publications

Scottish Executive

Research study on the effectiveness of NPPG8: Town centres and retailing,

Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2004, 152p (available from www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/01/18825/32297)

This document presents research commissioned by the Scottish Executive from CBRE, University of Stirling and Colin Buchanan and Partners into the effectiveness of NPPG8. The research included an assessment of existing findings on retailing in Scotland, survey work and focus groups and represents a broad based consultation with experts and practitioners. Topics included in the document are: retail change, defining centres - their use mix and status, sequential approach – flexibility and definition, support for new development, retail deprivation and retail assessment methodology. The report urges better data collection and more evidence based research. Flexibility is required with greater attention to locally meaningful interpretations of concepts such as edge of centre. A consumer based understanding of the relationship between parking and shopping is required.

Scottish Executive

Retail Development Survey,

Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Central Unit. (available from www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Planning/About/OtherInfo)

GVA Grimley published a report entitled **Monitoring retail developments** (Edinburgh: Scottish Office,87p) in 1998.The aim of the study was to discover what data sources would need to be collected to implement planning guidance in Scotland. The Retail Development Survey was first published for the year 1998 and is updated annually. It reviews all retail planning applications in Scotland, giving information on their progress. It details the plans submitted by planning authority giving tables with floorspace, type of development, construction type and location type. It also considers the proposals in relation to sequential development. It provides a very useful summary with the information clearly tabulated. Hopefully it will become an annual publication. The most recent report is for 2004.

Scottish Executive

Retail development survey 1998-2002,

Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2004, 31p. 0 7559 4281 7 (available from www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/07/19669/40371)

This report brings together the findings from the annual retail development reports for 1998-2002 to give five year trend data. The report indicates that the current system is

producing retail proposals which follow national guidance policy. The trend for proposals both in terms of floorspace and numbers of proposals is relatively constant representing continued investment to offer choice and competition. Higher floorspace levels are in the non food sector for comparison goods and mixed developments rather than in convenience. Town centre locations have been the locus of most construction. The sequential approach is being applied. Mixed developments pose new challenges. Chapters detail number of developments, floorspace, type of development, construction type, location and sequential development.

Scottish Executive, Development Department

Scottish planning policy SPP8: Town centres; consultation draft,
Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2005, 12p. ISBN 1741 1203

The draft document for Scottish planning guidance on town centres. Key principles are outlined under the headings: identifying a network of centres, focusing development in town centres, improving town centres, providing a safe and attractive environment, enhancing accessibility and monitoring and review. Responses to the draft as submitted to the Scottish Executive can be viewed on line at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/01/06131339

Scottish Executive

Scottish planning policy SPP8: Town centres and retailing
Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2006, 16p. (available from www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/26112710/0)

This is the final policy statement. It outlines the key principles and the way they will be applied. The town centre focus remains. The importance of the plan-led approach is emphasised in the recognition of a network of centres, flexibility, the involvement of stakeholders and negotiation between developers and planners on issues such as design.

2. A Selection of Articles on Scottish Planning Policy

Bromley, G. and Kirk, K.

Does planning make a difference to urban form? Recent evidence from Central Scotland,

Environment and Planning A, 37(2), 2005, 355-378.

New developments change urban form. Sometimes these developments result from planning initiatives and sometimes they emerge despite planning restraints. The case studies in this article include Braehead shopping centre. The development went ahead despite planning, being given the go-ahead as the result of an appeal. It had been argued that it did not meet the terms of the strategic plan and contravened other guidance. The potential regeneration impacts led to the appeal succeeding. It has shaped urban form in the area and is now a key aspect of future strategic plans for the area. It is suggested that private service and industry sector developments arise in different ways from public sector and housing developments and that as a result they often impact on urban form but not as a result of pro-active planning.

Dawson, J.

Future patterns of retailing in Scotland,

Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Central Unit, 2000, 52p. (Available from www.scotland.gov.uk/cru/kd01/blue/retail-01.htm)

This report reviews trends in retailing in Scotland and suggests ways in which the sector is likely to develop over the next ten to fifteen years. Of relevance to planning are the sections which consider the likely spatial distribution of shopping in the future and the role of different sizes of centre. It makes forecasts of the spatial impact of e-retailing. Overall it is noted that market towns are likely to be pressed to maintain trading levels.

Dawson, J.

Retailing in Scotland,

European Retail Digest, 35(Sept), 2002, 24-26.

A succinct review of Scottish retail trends. Differences in Scottish retailing are highlighted. These include differences in consumption, urban structure, retail structure and infrastructure. From a planning perspective the degree of market concentration and its impact on urban retail structures is noted. The role of smaller towns which have rich hinterland areas is also identified as important aspect of the Scottish retail scene.

Drysdale, R.

Property and planning, in

The Scottish retail review.

Edinburgh: Scottish Retail Consortium, 2005, 10-11. (order free from www.csr.ac.uk)

A review of the impact of planning issues in Scotland noting in particular the position of new town centres and the position on third party rights of appeal.

Findlay, A.M. and Sparks, L.

Retail land-use planning: the Scottish perspective,

European Retail Digest, 49, 2006, 30-35.

This article focuses on the differences between PPS6 and the draft version of SPP8. In particular it highlights the responses received from the circulation of the draft document. These included clarification and consistency of some terms used, how uses contributing to vitality and viability had been decided upon, the involvement of stakeholders and concern about the welfare of centres apart from town centres.

Hayton, K.

Retail planning guidance and policy in Scotland: a review and critical analysis,

Town Planning Review, 72(1), 2001, 97-120.

The first part of the article gives a resume of planning policy guidance as at 2000. The second part of the article focuses more specifically on the Strathclyde Structure Plan and the implementation of policy with reference to the Buchanan Galleries development. Although this development passed all the sequential tests it is argued

that its impact will more closely resemble that of a regional shopping centre. Policy would appear to lag behind retail format development and there is inadequate attention to scale, physical integration of developments and cumulative effects.

Hope, S., Anderson, S. and Sawyer, B.

The quality of rural services in Scotland,

Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, 2000.

This report was prepared by System Three. It monitors trends in service provision in rural Scotland. Shopping in rural Scotland is discussed on pages 27-37. It is argued that many rural dwellers have accepted a trade-off between service provision and rural dwelling. They are happy to accept commuting to shop. Where patterns of food shopping have shifted this has resulted in a shift for other service functions as well. Research was carried out in Scourie, Errol and Millport and data were used from Mackay Consultants for 354 localities. This showed that the greatest closures in rural food shops occurred in the 1980s.

Smith, A. and Sparks, L.

Planning for small-scale retailing: evidence from Scotland,

Planning Theory and Practice, 2(3), 2001, 277-292.

The article provides a review of planning and other policies towards small shops and the perceived effectiveness of these policies. 32 Scottish planning authorities were surveyed to discover what policies they had towards small shops, how these operated and their perceived effectiveness. The authorities were also asked about other types of policies which they felt could be operated. The research involved study of structure plans, a questionnaire survey of planning authorities and focus group discussion with respondents. Policies being operated were largely land use based and did not distinguish between organisational forms so that smaller independent retailers were not explicitly recognised. The need to go beyond land use based planning was emphasised by the research findings.

Web Sites

All web linked documents were checked on 1/12/06

Documentation can be found on the Scottish Executive web site:

www.scotland.gov.uk (on home page click on Planning and Building to access planning information)

Updates on the performance of the Scottish retail sector can be found on The Centre for the Study of Retailing in Scotland web site: www.csrs.ac.uk

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Approved floorspace by sequential location 1998-2002 (Scottish Executive, 2004, p.15)

