

ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 51

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Proposed Changes to Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres Consultation		
Date of Meeting:	11 September 2008		
Report of:	Director of Environment		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Carly Dockerill	Tel: 29-2382
	E-mail:	carly.dockerill@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Key Decision:	Yes	Forward Plan No. ENV2914	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consult members on the changes proposed to Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) – *Planning for Town Centres*. This report seeks Cabinet Members' endorsement of the Council's consultation response to PPS6 Communities and Local Government (CLG).
- 1.2 The current Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6) – *Planning for Town Centres* and the proposed changes to PPS6 can be viewed on the internet at www.communities.gov.uk.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the changes and implications regarding national policy advice outlined in this report.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet Member endorses the draft response to CLG as set out in Appendix B of this report.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The Planning White Paper, *Planning for a Sustainable Future* (HM Government 2007) announced that the current approach in Planning Policy Statement 6: *Planning for town centres* (PPS6) to assessing the impact of proposals outside town centres would be reviewed.
- 3.2 The White Paper said that Government would consult on proposals for policy changes and that new guidance would be prepared. The Government would consider how best to address competition considerations in town centre policy, taking into account the conclusions of the Competition Commission inquiry into the groceries market, before finalising any changes to policy.

- 3.3 This consultation now seeks views on these proposed policy changes.
- 3.4 The emphasis on the importance of maintaining the health and vitality of town centres that was established in PPS6 and PPG6 is retained in the proposed changes. The main types of land use to which the policy applies are:
- Retail (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres);
 - Leisure, entertainment facilities, and the more intensive sport and recreation uses (such as cinemas, restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, bowling alleys and bingo halls);
 - Offices, both commercial and those of public bodies;
 - Arts, culture and tourism (theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels, and conference facilities); and
 - Small-scale community facilities (including health centres, pharmacies, post offices, libraries and job centres).
- 3.5 The proposed changes to PPS6 set out the key objective for town centres as the promotion of vital and viable city, town and other centres by:
- Planning for growth 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;
 - Promote competition between retailers and enhance 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.
 - Raising the productivity growth rate of the UK economy – through tackling market failures around investment, innovation, competition, skills and enterprise and maximising job opportunities for all.
 - Supporting efficient, competitive and innovative retail, leisure, tourism and other sectors; and
 - Improving accessibility.
- 3.6 The main revisions that the PPS6 consultation recommends are:
- To remove the requirement for an applicant to demonstrate ‘need’ for a proposal which is in an edge of centre or an out of centre location and is not in accordance with an up to date development plan strategy.

- To introduce a more detailed ‘impact assessment’ framework which assesses economic, social and environmental criteria so that local authorities can assess in more detail, the impacts on the town centre. It tests whether impact is positive or negative on town centre consumer choice and retail diversity; investment and town centre trade and gives local authorities the powers to cap the size of large retail developments where this test is justified. Regenerative and employment effects that developments might provide would also be a consideration.
 - To keep the ‘sequential test’ that requires developers to seek the most central sites first.
 - To test the design quality of the development.
 - To make clear that where negative impacts on the town centre are significant this will normally justify a refusal of planning permission.
 - To require that local authorities proactively plan their town centres; to plan for sustainable growth through policies which are responsive to economic change.
 - To actively promote customer choice and competition, meaning that LPAs would be given the opportunity help to create the right conditions to help retail diversity flourish.
 - To support the use of conditions in order to limit unit sizes, specify the maximum overall floor space permitted, and limit the range of goods sold.
- 3.7 The new proposals strengthen current PPS6 and give local authorities more scope to refuse out of town development proposals that threaten the survival of high streets and small shops.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Internal consultation with Economic Development and Tourism has been undertaken, and their comments incorporated into this report accordingly.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Patrick Rice

Date: 06/08/08

Legal Implications:

Once issued the policies contained in PPS6 will be material planning considerations which local planning authorities will need to take into account in the determination of relevant planning applications. It is not considered that any adverse human rights implications arise from this report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Hilary Woodward

Date: 04/08/08

Equalities Implications:

The proposed changes to PPS6 set out to promote the needs of socially excluded groups and improve accessibility.

Sustainability Implications:

The proposed changes promote retention of existing shopping centres where they are most accessible.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

None identified.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

None identified.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

Retaining the town centre as a competitive Regional Shopping area is essential to the economy of the city.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The report considers the draft guidance in comparison to the status quo.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To ensure there is detailed, up to date, clear advice to all those with an interest in the development process on relevant town centre issues.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Appendix A: Outline of Proposed Changes to PPS6.
2. Appendix B: Consultation response to CLG: Proposed Changes to PPS6

Documents In Members' Rooms

None.

Background Documents

1. Proposed Changes to Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres Consultation, July 2008 see website;
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicystatements/pps6/>

