

Supporting town centre development through national planning policy

- PPS6 proposed changes
- Streamlining policy
- Town Centres Practice Guidance
- Competition Commission

- The economic downturn means that the retail sector is facing tough times.....
- Already seen the demise of some well-known high street names
- Growing levels of vacancies on high streets

Challenges today



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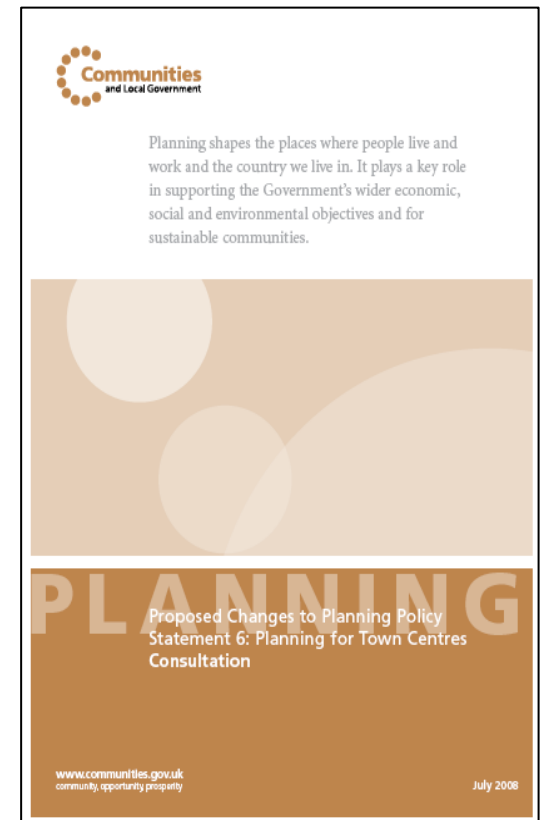
- Likely to see further slowdown in development proposals + closures of retail and leisure facilities
- Planning can't solve all these problems BUT it can create help to create the right conditions to support economic recovery

- 2007 Planning White Paper commitment to:
 - i) remove ‘need test’ for planning applications
 - ii) improve impact test
 - iii) improve policy to better promote consumer choice and retail competition
- Want ‘town centre first’ policy to continue to be effective.
- Published PPS6 proposed changes last July

Proposed changes

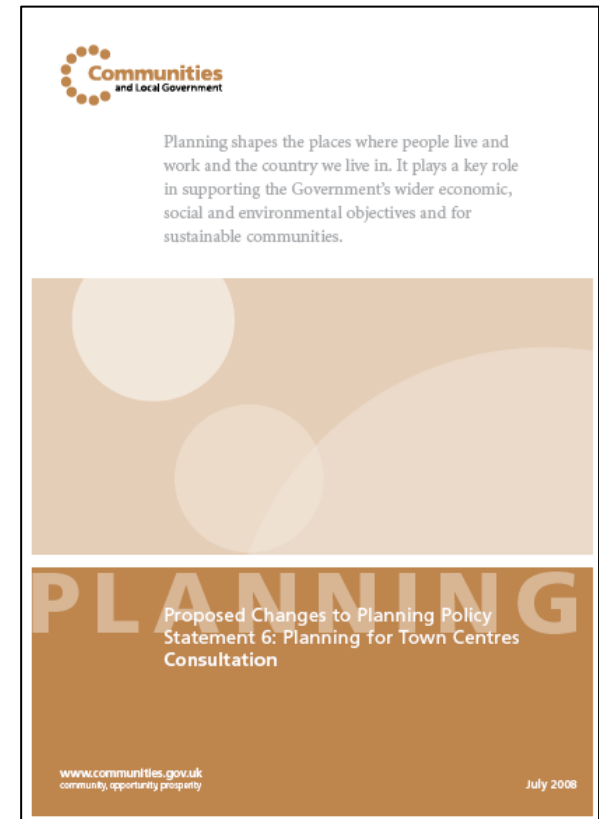
Key features of changes included:

- Remove need test when considering planning applications
- Proposing more rounded impact test
- Stronger references to promotion of competition + enhancement of consumer choice.



Proposed changes

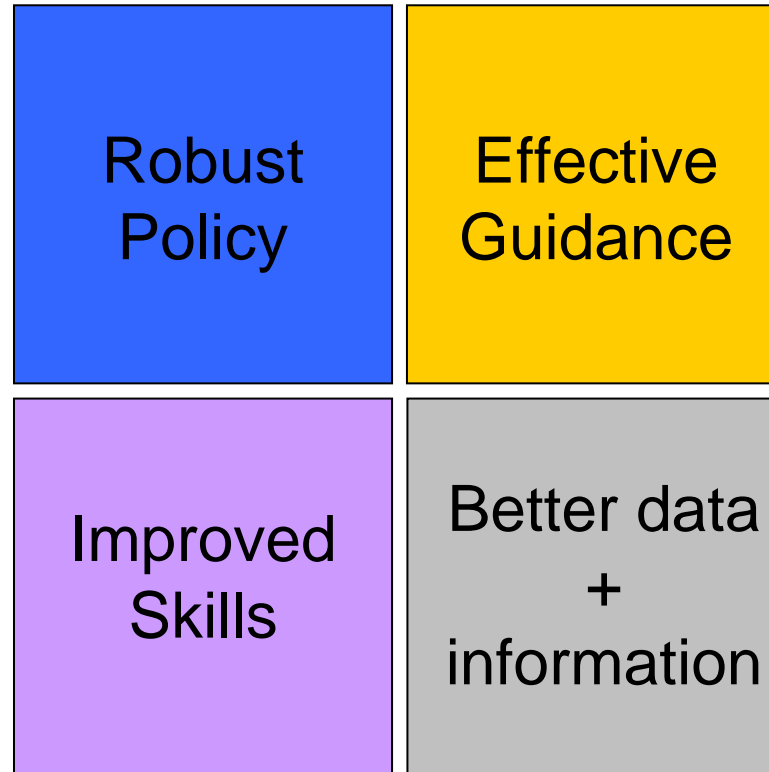
- Support for small shops + independent retailers
- Strong messages on design quality
- Commitment to make final policy shorter and more strategic + publish supporting practice guidance



What's not changing

- Commitment to promoting vitality and viability of town centres- 'town centres first' policy
- Retaining 'sequential approach'
- Emphasis on plan-making.
- 'Need' as part of plan-making.

What did stakeholders say to proposed changes ?



Now is ideal time to take forward Planning White Paper commitment to integrate and streamline all substantive current and emerging national planning policy on economic development:

- PPG4 *Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms* (1992)
- Draft PPS4 *Planning for Sustainable Economic Development* (2007)
- PPS6 *Planning for Town Centres* (2005)
- Proposed changes to PPS6 (2008)
- Aspects of PPS7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* that relate to the rural economy
- PPG5 *Simplified Planning Zones*

Key existing policy messages that we'll be reinforcing in the consultation document include:

- Ensuring development secures high quality, inclusive design that improves character + quality of an area
- Maintaining 'town centre first', where appropriate taking measures to protect + enhance the establish character + diversity
- Recognition of need to protect small shops and independent retailers
- Ensuring continued strong protection of the countryside whilst allowing rural communities to take advantage of economic opportunities and new ways of working

Planning for town centres practice guidance

- Practice guidance essential to effective implementation of policy.
- Will cover main town centre uses (focus on retail, leisure, offices) + use case studies to illustrate good practice
- Timing: aiming to publish draft **guidance alongside consultation PPS.**

- Competition Commission report into UK grocery retail sector
- Commission proposed introducing a competition test for large grocery store planning applications



- Tesco appealed against the Commission's findings
- Competition Appeal Tribunal upheld Tesco's challenge
- CAT judgment did not question the Commission's findings nor its proposed measures.
- The Competition Commission is currently considering the judgment before deciding next steps.

- Town centres facing significant challenges. Government still fully committed to promoting vitality and viability of town centres
- Forthcoming draft PPS Planning system can play key role to support small shops + safeguard town centre vitality and viability
- Recognise practice guidance has an important role in ensuring policy objectives are achieved.