

Creating a future for small towns

Solutions through Policy

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Aberdeenshire Council



Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through . . .

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by . . .

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

Outline

- Role of the land use planning system
- National policy
- Local interpretation
- What it all means
- The stacked deck
- Missed opportunities

Role of the land use planning system

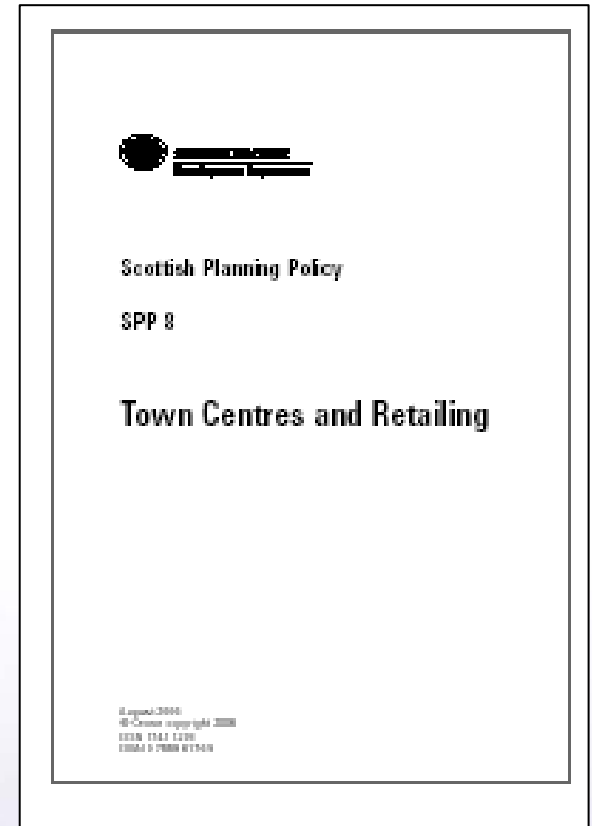
- **Framework** for investment decisions
- **Regulation** of land use

- Identification of opportunity
- Protection from market forces for public benefit

- Development plan
- Development management decisions

National retail policy and small towns- Scottish Planning Policy 8

- Town centres and retailing
 - Not just retailing, mix of uses
 - Some retailing more appropriate for “commercial centres”
- Key policy objectives
 - Distinct, competitive places attractive to investors
 - Access to shopping, leisure and other services; fill deficiencies
 - Improve physical quality
 - Development in existing accessible locations



SPP8

- Network of centres;
 - retail hierarchy; importance of small towns and villages
- Focussing development in town centres
 - Sequential approach to site selection
- Improving town centres- town centre strategies
 - Indicating capacity for change and promoting opportunities
- Providing a safe and attractive environment
 - Well designed, attractive, fit for purpose
- Enhancing accessibility
 - All retail to provide a high degree of accessibility
- Monitoring
 - Health checks

Aberdeenshire Local Plan

- Policies Emp \5, 6 and 7
- Emp\5: Defined town centres
 - Protection for vitality and viability of defined town centres
- Emp\6: Retail development in larger settlements
 - Sequential approach
- Emp \ 7: Settlements without a town centre
 - Smaller proposals only
 - Sequential approach
- Proposals maps

Does it meet the needs of SPP8?



Means of providing solutions

- The retail hierarchy
- The sequential approach
- Protection of vitality and viability
- Town Centre strategies

The retail hierarchy

City centre	→	All retail, particularly very large
Principal town centres	→	Convenience, moderate comparison
Other town centres	→	Convenience
Neighbourhood centres	→	Local convenience
Other centres	→	Large scale bulky
Rural shops	→	Local convenience

The sequential approach

Town centre sites



Edge of town centre sites;



Other commercial centres identified within the development plan;



Out-of-centre sites in locations that are, or can be made, easily accessible by a choice of modes of transport.

Vitality and viability

- Quantitative methods
 - Retail impact assessment
 - Type of goods
 - Calculation of diversion of trade
- Qualitative assessment
 - Impact on vitality of existing centres
 - Town centre healthchecks



Town centre strategies

- Capacity for change
- Opportunities for diversification
- Constraints to implementation

- Means of delivery
- Promotion of Opportunities
- Monitoring

A stacked deck?

- Coping with the unforeseen
- “Hope” value
- How much impact is required to “hurt” town centres
- Sequential approach loopholes
 - “Flexibility and realism”
 - “ Commercial realities”
- New shops, a popular choice with voters



Taking solutions forward

- Velvet Glove- Proactive measures
 - Plan for the likely needs of centres
 - Town centre strategies
 - Site assembly and “knocking heads together”
 - Business improvement districts
- Iron Fist- reactive measures
 - Acknowledge loss of opportunity
 - The courage to say “no” to out of town