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# PRESS RELEASE

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## A Change Of Emphasis in the New Retail Planning Policy

The Government has now released its revised PPS6, its planning policy statement which outlines the future for town centre development.

In a significant move, the Government has removed the requirement for applicants to demonstrate the need for proposals that are not within a town centre. It was felt that the Needs Test has not performed the role that was envisaged and has stifled competition particularly for smaller operators wishing to provide additional competition within an area.

Comments Chris Edge, Associate at HOW Planning: "The original Need Test was found to be ineffective in achieving its aims and often ended up being the focus of very technical debate at Planning Inquiry; often to the detriment of the bigger picture. The Government assessed that 70% of all retail cases considered by the Secretary of State between 2005 and 2007 were the result of an inability by the applicant to demonstrate need."

The latest draft of PPS6 also doesn't make a decision on the anticipated Competition Test, as a result of a pending appeal by Tesco to the Competition Commission Tribunal.

Says Chris: "It is anticipated that the Competition Test will be inserted into PPS6 in a revised draft and re-consulted upon later in the year. This will make the Office of Fair Trading a statutory consultee on all planning applications where a single operator would command more than 60% of the market share within a defined catchment.

"The overriding objectives of the revised planning policy statement seem to strengthen the Government's 'town centre first' policy whilst seeking to introduce greater competition and choice of retailers."

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