



# Ipswich Local Plan

*Supplementary Planning Guidance*

## Out of town centre shopping



**IPSWICH**

**BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

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# Out-of-town centre shopping

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# Out-of-town centre shopping

1.1 These Guidelines interpret and provide more detail for the implementation of planning policy on out-of-town centre shopping contained in the Ipswich Local Plan November 1997.

1.2 These Guidelines set out the operation of planning policy with regard to two specific types of retail premises, namely retail warehousing and large convenience goods stores (such as supermarkets and food superstores).

1.3 Whilst this document highlights types of operations which are likely to be acceptable, any major proposal will still need to demonstrate that it is consistent with national and local planning policy and will need to be supported by an impact assessment giving evidence on :-

the sequential approach to site selection

likely economic impact on Ipswich town centre and local shopping centres

accessibility by a choice of means of transport

environmental impacts

2.1 The Shopping Chapter of the Local Plan deals with policies and proposals for the Central Shopping Area (CSA), retail warehouses, food supermarkets, superstores and local shops serving the needs of the local community.

2.2 Key Objectives of the Plan are :-

“To protect the vitality and viability of the Town Centre in order to maintain and enhance its role as a main shopping area of the town and as a regional shopping centre; and

To ensure that shops selling convenience and bulk comparison goods suited to out-of-town centre locations are appropriately sited in order to adequately serve the retail catchment population of Ipswich.”

## 1. SCOPE OF THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

## 2. POLICY BACKGROUND

# Out-of-town centre shopping

## 2. POLICY BACKGROUND

2.3 New Government Guidance on Town Centres and Retail Development was issued in Revised PPG6 (June 1996). This PPG emphasises a plan-led approach to promoting development in town centres and the sequential approach to selecting sites for development.

2.4 The principle of the sequential approach applies to both comparison and convenience shopping. PPG6 states that *“comparison shopping should continue to be the mainstay of retailing in most sizeable town centres. Local authorities should encourage comparison shopping to locate in town centres or failing that on the edge of centres and should avoid the sporadic siting of comparison shopping out of centres, especially along road corridors.”*

2.5 With regard to retail warehousing PPG6 states that *“some types of retailing, such as large stores selling bulky goods, may not be able to find suitable sites either in or on the edge of town centres. In such cases, the local planning authority should still seek to ensure that such developments are located close to where they will be easily accessible by a choice of means of transport”.*

2.6 The Local Plan perceives bulky goods retail warehouses as trading against each other, rather than competing with the Town Centre. The Local Plan seeks to ensure that the effect of retail warehousing on the vitality and viability of the Town Centre is controlled (either by conditions of planning permission and/or Section 106 Planning Obligation Agreements).

2.7 PPG6 advises that planning conditions can be used to prevent out-of-centre developments being subdivided into a large number of smaller shops and also to limit the range or types of goods sold.

## 3. OUT-OF-TOWN CENTRE SHOPPING

3.1 Policies S9 -S12 of the Shopping Chapter of the Local Plan set out the policy framework for assessing proposals for retail warehousing.

3.2 Retail warehouses are an appropriate format for the sale of bulky goods. With their extensive display areas and adjacent car parking, they can provide their customers with a wide choice of goods which can be easily loaded into a car for transport home. Policy S13 (included as an Appendix to this Guidance) lists the types of goods which will be acceptable for sale in existing

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and proposed retail warehouse parks. Included in this list is a general category of retail trades dealing in bulky goods and requiring display areas of a size likely to be unavailable in the Town Centre.

### 3. OUT-OF-TOWN CENTRE SHOPPING

3.3 Policy S10 is consistent with the Revised PPG6 which defines retail warehouses as *“large single-level stores specialising in the sale of household goods (such as carpets, furniture and electrical goods) and bulky DIY items, catering mainly for car borne customers and often in out-of-centre locations.”*

3.4 For clarity, the following definitions will apply when interpreting Local Plan Policy :-

#### 3.4.1 Retail Warehouses

Retail warehouses should be in excess of 929 square metres gross floorspace in size (10,000 square feet). The creation of smaller units (including subdivision of existing premises) would allow the premises to be occupied by retailers who could satisfactorily be accommodated in, or adjacent to the Town Centre, defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map Inset Map November 1997.

#### 3.4.2 Bulky Goods

Bulky goods are defined as durable goods which, by means of their size, weight or shape require vehicular transport close by for the customer to carry them away, and which cannot readily be carried home or taken on a conventional bus. The multiple purchase of goods at one time is not considered by the Council to be bulky. In this context, bulky goods does not include food.

Policy S10 lists items which the Council considers to be bulky. A cautious and coordinated approach will be taken to the interpretation of criterion ‘G’ of the policy. Items such as linens and bedding, footwear, clothing and pet accessories are not considered to be bulky goods. For further guidance, advice should be sought from the planning department.

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## 3. OUT-OF-TOWN CENTRE SHOPPING

### 3.4.3 Proportion of non-bulky goods in retail warehouses

It is accepted that stores which sell bulky goods from retail warehouses may also sell a proportion of other goods. These may take the form of ancillary goods (i.e. items without which the bulky goods cannot function) or incidental goods (non-bulky goods within the same product range as the bulky goods offered for sale).

It is considered acceptable for up to 10% or 140 square metres (1,500 square feet) of the gross floorspace (whichever is the smaller) to be devoted to ancillary and incidental goods taken together. This amount of floorspace is considered to be approximately equivalent to a small town centre shop which might sell a range of small comparison goods.

### 3.4.4 Large convenience goods stores

A number of shops of this type exist in Ipswich, both supermarkets of 500 - 2,500 square metres (5,375 - 27,000 square feet) and superstores over 2,500 square metres (or 27,000 square feet). These sell mainly food or other convenience goods.

However, in response to competition, there is increasing pressure to diversify into comparison goods. Whilst the effect of this diversification are limited to date, the change of such stores to comparison goods, especially where located outside the Town Centre or local shopping centres would have a significant effect on their vitality and viability.

In the case of any new supermarket or superstore which may be permitted, or where control can be exercised over existing stores, the amount of floorspace to be used for the sale of comparison goods should not exceed 10% or 140 square metres (1,500 square feet) of gross floorspace, whichever is the lesser. The limit is based on the same reasoning as that employed in setting the limit for incidental and ancillary goods in retail warehouses.

## Appendix

**S10** Within the identified existing and proposed retail parks the sale of the following types of goods will be acceptable:-

- (a) Do-It-Yourself stores and builders merchants;
- (b) Garden Centre Goods;
- (c) Furniture and Carpet Stores;
- (d) Electrical Goods;
- (e) Car Accessories;
- (f) Car Sales and Caravans; and
- (g) Other retail trades dealing in bulky goods and requiring display areas of a size unlikely to be available in the Town Centre.

**The goods to be sold in such retail warehouses shall be controlled by planning condition and/or planning obligation agreement.**

### **OUT-OF-TOWN CENTRE SHOPPING**

#### **POLICY S10**