

London Plan Examination in Public – Written Statement

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Retailing

M89. Would policies SD6, SD7, SD8, SD9 and E9B provide an effective strategic framework for the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans relating to town centres and all types of main town centre use development (including bulky goods retailing), that is consistent with national policy?

Town centres and their retail components are of immense importance to London’s local economies. While the Assembly agrees with the principal of diversifying town centre uses but a balance needs to be kept to ensure that increased residential uses in town centres does not displace retail functions.

The Assembly’s Planning Committee believes the Draft London Plan needs to go beyond the conventional approach that focuses on town centres of retailing. It needs to be extended to reflect the fact that town centres need to expand their role and activities if they are to remain viable. They will, in the future, need to accommodate service and residential uses. Local and neighbourhood plans will be essential in delivering these changes.

But, Policy SD6 makes no reference to the engagement of local communities and stakeholders in the provision of social infrastructure.

As a consequence of this, the Assembly’s Planning Committee believes that Policy SD6 should state that “the provision of social infrastructure should be enhanced, particularly where it is necessary to support identified need from town centre and local residents. Facilities should be located in places that are easily accessible to all users, taking into account accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling (Policy S1 Developing London’s social infrastructure) and accessibility to meet the needs of all Londoners (Policy D3 Inclusive design). Facilities should also be located in places that maximise surrounding town centres uses”.

Policy SD6 part D argues that town centres are particularly suitable for smaller households, renters, older people and students, needs to be connected more strongly to policies on social infrastructure. These new uses and intensified residential development are likely to increase demand for social infrastructure and these should be delivered through local and neighbourhood plans.

Policy SD6 should therefore be further amended to: "Facilities should also be located in places that maximise surrounding town centres uses. Local residents and stakeholders should be engaged with on plans for new social infrastructure in town centres".