

PRESS INFORMATION

ACCESSIBLE RETAIL CHALLENGES GOVERNMENT ON PPG6 REVISIONS

Accessible Retail, the trade body that represents both owners and occupiers in the retail warehouse and superstore industry, has challenged the Governments pending revisions to PPG6.

In a letter and paper to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the body has identified four major policy weaknesses which could potentially send a successful British industry into decline.

Andrew Lewis-Pratt, the incoming chairman of Accessible Retail and Chief Executive of The Junction comments, “These new policy guidelines fail to recognise the importance of existing retail warehouse developments to the retail industry. Barriers to its growth will damage the economy and halt the healthy level of competitiveness that currently benefits the consumer. The restrictions are too severe and not in the country’s overall interest.

Research has identified that locating bulky goods warehouses out of town is not a cause of town centre decline but conversely has a positive impact on town centre congestion. Restricting development for the bulky goods business can only have a negative effect for the consumers in terms of accessibility and cost alone.”

Accessible Retail comments that the Government has failed to recognise the part played by retail warehouse development in securing regeneration and argues that such development can and indeed has already had a positive impact on the local community.

Accessible Retail also identifies two unsubstantiated assertions which have shaped the policy. The first is that retail warehouses contribute to social exclusion and the second is that out of town outlets are less sustainable than if located in town centres. The paper cites evidence that refutes these claims

Andrew Lewis-Pratt states: -

“We recognise the importance of town centres and support the Government’s policy to enhance and promote them. The policy changes we seek do not harm this aim as demonstrated in our paper to the Chancellor. However, our business comprises property worth £15bn of which over £10bn is in pension funds, it employs many thousands of people, has been a catalyst in tackling regeneration and is a vital part of the British economy. To restrict its growth by these hostile planning policies puts these benefits under threat and can only cause irreparable damage to our industry.”

25 November 2003

Notes to editors:

- Please see paper attached.
- Accessible Retail is the trade body representing the retail warehouse and superstore industry. It has over 750 members comprising owners, occupiers and professional advisors.

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