

## Investors in Retail

### ORGANISATIONS JOINTLY RAISE CONCERNS OVER PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE BILL AMENDMENT

Liberal Democrat plans to restrict any increase of retail floor space within a building to 10% before planning consent is required, has been criticised by three property industry bodies.

Accessible Retail, The British Council of Shopping Centres and the Shopping Park Investors Forum - have jointly written to Lord Rooker at the House of Lords to express “mutual concerns” over an amendment to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill as it reaches its Committee Stage in the House of Lords. Lord Rooker is Government Minister chairing the committee stage of the bill.

The concerns relate to a proposed amendment, which seeks to restrict the percentage of retail space used in a property. The amendment, which comes under the heading “Control of Development’ reads:

‘(iii) do not materially increase the overall retail sales floor of the building by more than 10%’

The organisations believe that the amendment could affect all retail buildings, including those in town centres. Independent retailers would have to apply for planning permission for only modest proposals, which would add to their overall costs, undermine their competitiveness and cause uncertainty.

Comments Martin Clews, Chairman of the Shopping Park Investors Forum:

“We believe this amendment could have a profound impact upon the retail sector generally and contradicts policy elsewhere. Specifically it would act against Government’s plan to promote retail in town centres by reducing the ability of the town centre retailers to be flexible, innovative and adaptive to competition.”

Clews added that the proposal also allowed for too much ambiguity:

“Who will define what constitutes a “material increase” or a “retail sales floor” - local authorities or developers?” he asked. “We submit that the best way forward for Government is to use the emerging PPS6 “planning for Town Centres” as the appropriate vehicle to address these matters because the existing Planning Acts already contain the powers necessary for Planning Authorities to deal with all the issues that the Clause raises.”

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For further information:

Mike Taylor  
Board Member Accessible Retail  
C/o King Sturge  
Stratford Place  
London W1C 1ST  
Mobile: 07855 504824

Martin Clews  
Chairman Shopping Park Investors Forum  
Mobile: 07977 487277

Jeremy Hinds  
Director PDC  
Suite 3C Deansgate  
Manchester M3 4EN  
Mobile:07989 604877

Cliff Davis-Coleman  
Director CDC Public Affairs  
7 Filmer Mews  
75 Filmer Road  
London SW6 7JF  
Mobile:07932 161710