

Meeting of:	<b>CABINET</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>11 MARCH 2025</b>
Report Title:	<b>DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG): RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES</b>
Responsible Officer:	<b>LOUIS PANNELL PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY OFFICER</b>
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	<b>There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.</b>
Executive Summary:	<b>The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to consult on a draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Retail and Commercial Development. Subsequent adoption of this SPG will enable effective implementation of the Retail and Commercial Development Policies within the Council's Replacement Local Development Plan adopted March 2024 (RLDP), the Council's statutory land-use Planning document.</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to consult on the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (**SPG**) for Retail and Commercial Development (**Appendix 1**).

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Replacement Local Development Plan (**RLDP**), adopted March 2024, has a key role in ensuring that Town, District and Local Centres (**Centres**), are promoted as hubs of socio-economic activity, and are the focal points for a diverse range of services which support the needs of the communities they serve. Town Centres offer a wide range of shops and facilities serving a large catchment area, whereas District and Local Centres usually contain a small foodstore and a range of services that serve a smaller, more limited catchment area. They act as the most appropriate and sustainable locations for new retail, leisure and supporting commercial development. This accords with the '*Town Centre First*' policy contained within Planning Policy Wales and '*Future Wales: The National Plan 2040*' (Future Wales), to help build resilient communities, and respond to the long-term impacts of Covid-19, which have not only re-focused the lives of people and communities but acted as a further driver towards making such Centres multi-functional places.

- 2.2 The framework for the management of retail and commercial development in the County Borough is provided by Policies SP12, and its supporting Policies ENT6, ENT7, ENT8 and ENT9. The *Retail Study 2018* formed a key part of the adopted RLDP's evidence base and helped form the basis of these policies. The Retail Study 2018 set out a number of recommendations, including '*retail need*' (the demand for additional retail floorspace), the distribution of retail need and the definition of "*Primary Shopping Areas*" and "*Secondary Shopping Areas*", to inform the policies contained within the adopted RLDP. The *Retail Study Update 2022*, further analysed trends affecting the retail sector across the County Borough, considered how trends may change over time and then assessed future needs for '*comparison*' retail (retail that sells goods that consumers compare before purchasing, goods that are usually higher value and purchased infrequently e.g. furniture, clothing, electronics), and '*convenience*' retail floorspace (retail that stocks a wide range of everyday items e.g. groceries) to 2033.
- 2.3 In recognising that Centres are moving away from their traditional retail roles, Policy SP12, and its supporting policies seek to ensure that such Centres become the focus of a wider variety of services and facilities. The '*Town Centre First*' approach is key to enabling such Centres to increasingly become multi-functional places and community focal points, thereby rendering them more viable as "go-to" destinations.
- 2.4 The purpose of this SPG is to expand on the above policies and provide clarity in respect of their future interpretation and setting out what the Council expects from applicants in respect of satisfying the detailed criteria of those policies.
- 2.5 Development Control Committee were informed of the need to produce a SPG for Retail and Commercial Development on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Councillor Easterbrook, volunteered to champion production of the SPG for Retail and Commercial Development and has since been working alongside the Principal Strategic Planning Policy Officer to progress the SPG. The draft SPG attached to this report (**Appendix 1**) represents the result of this work.

### **3. Current situation / proposal**

- 3.1 The purpose of this proposed SPG for Retail and Commercial Development is to support and provide further direction on the implementation of the retail and commercial development policies contained within the RLDP which include:
- SP12: Retailing, Commercial and Service Centres
  - ENT6: Retail and Commercial Development
  - ENT7: Development in Commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg
  - ENT8: Non-A1 (shops), A2 (financial/professional services) and A3 (food and drink) Uses Outside of Primary Shopping Areas
  - ENT9: Retail Development Outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres

3.2 The SPG will provide detailed guidance on retail and commercial development to protect the retail Centres. The SPG, once adopted, will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications for retail and commercial development.

3.3 The SPG seeks to provide specific guidance on:

*Policy ENT7: Development in Commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg.*

3.4 The Policy ENT7 defines Primary Shopping Areas and Secondary Shopping Areas within these three commercial Centres. This policy seeks to protect these areas to ensure their existing function is not diluted so they can continue to operate as viable shopping Centres. The SPG will provide further clarity on what is deemed acceptable within these named areas.

*Policy ENT8: Non-A1, A2 and A3 Outside of Primary Shopping Areas.*

3.5 The RLDP allows more flexibility to introduce shops, financial/professional services and food and drink uses outside of Primary Shopping Areas. This policy ENT8 explains what other uses may be acceptable in commercial Centres. The SPG will clarify what uses may be acceptable within commercial Centres outside of Bridgend, Porthcawl or Maesteg.

*Policy ENT9: Retail Development Outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres.*

3.6 This policy explains what type of retail and commercial development is acceptable outside of retailing and commercial Centres. The SPG will provide guidance on the loss of retail and commercial floorspace outside of commercial Centres in addition to explaining what types of development would be appropriate on existing retail parks.

3.7 Ultimately, the guidance in the SPG will assist applicants and decision makers when considering changes of use in retail Centres and other town Centre developments. The main aim is to ensure our retail Centres are sustainable in the long term.

3.8 Prior to seeking Council's approval for adoption, the SPG for Retail and Commercial Development will be subject to a public consultation exercise. Consultation responses will be sought to influence and shape the final version of the SPG. A consultation report will be reported back to Cabinet then to Council, to present a general summary of comments, the issues raised, the Local Planning Authority's response and how those comments have influenced the final version of the SPG. Once adopted, the final SPG will then add weight to the interpretation and application of RLDP retail and commercial development policies; provide more detailed advice to applicants preparing to submit planning applications and will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (**EIA**) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

## **5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

- 5.1 The SPG for Retail and Commercial Development will provide additional guidance and material weight to support adopted RLDP Policies that seek to provide clarity in respect of their future interpretation, setting out what the Council expects from applicants in respect of satisfying those policies' detailed criteria. This is a key contributory factor to delivering Local Wellbeing Objective 2 '*A county borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns.*'
- 5.2 The SPG will also contribute to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- A prosperous Wales – Ensuring retail and commercial Centres are protected, promoted and support a prosperous Wales by ensuring they act as hubs of socio-economic activity and are the focal points for a diverse range of services which support the needs of the communities they serve.
  - A resilient Wales – Ensuring retail and commercial Centres are protected, promoted and support a resilient Wales by ensuring they become increasingly multifunctional, which will help to respond to the long-term impacts of Covid-19 and online shopping.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct climate change implications from this report, although the SPG will provide additional guidance to ensure that new retail and commercial development is directed to existing retail and commercial Centres, that are well connected by established active travel routes and public transport links. This will help to encourage a sustainable modal shift, reducing carbon emissions that are released from car-borne travel.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 That Cabinet:
- a) Approve the draft SPG for Retail and Commercial Development (**Appendix 1**) as the basis for a public consultation for a minimum period of 6 weeks.

- b) Authorise the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to make minor presentational changes, typographical or factual corrections as necessary prior to public consultation.
- c) Authorise the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to undertake the public consultation and to report the results of the public consultation back to Cabinet for approval to send the report to Council and seek adoption of the final SPG.

**Background documents**

None