

SR8 Individual shops

Planning permission for changes of use of individual shops from Class A1 use will be permitted provided all of the following criteria are met:

- a. the shop is within easy walking distance of a local, district, town centre or the regional shopping centre and local residents within its catchment would still be within easy walking distance of a comparable shop;**
- b. it has been adequately demonstrated that an A1 retail use is no longer economically viable in that particular unit; and**
- c. the development would not be significantly detrimental to the amenities of occupiers of nearby residential properties or the general character of the area.**

- 6.38 It is important, particularly for older people, people with disabilities and the very young who cannot easily travel far, that their convenience retail needs can be met within an easy walking distance within their neighbourhood. In terms of sustainable development, it is important that people are not dependant on use of the car for their day to day retail needs. Participants in a focus group on 'Retail and Town Centres' expressed great concern about the loss of corner shops. Such concern has been a key issue in the Hanover area of Brighton, for example, parts of which are not within easy walking distance of the centres. 'New Deal for Communities'³ (operating in East Brighton) also actively seeks to address poor access to affordable shops and to banks/building societies. Policy SR8 is designed to provide better protection for corner shops and to help ensure that sufficient alternatives exist nearby.
- 6.39 The catchment area of an individual shop is defined as being a radius of 400m from the unit; this being the maximum acceptable walking distance. In most cases, up to 300m is considered to be an 'easy walking distance' (PPS6 'Planning for Town Centres') and in some circumstances it may be a shorter distance depending on the topography of the area or physical barriers such as a busy main road preventing convenient access.
- 6.40 Indicators affecting economic viability which will be taken into account are:
- the characteristics of the unit;
 - its location within the neighbourhood;
 - the pedestrian activity associated with the unit and the locality as a whole; and
 - the length of time that the unit has been actively marketed on competitive terms.
- 6.41 Applicants will be expected to submit documentary evidence, including a comparison with units in a similar location, to demonstrate active marketing of the unit on competitive terms in support of their proposal.

³ 'New Deal for Communities' was a key programme in the government's strategy to help some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The programme is delivered through partnerships between local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and business.
