



Zone 1/F16,
Ashdown House,
123 Victoria Street,
London SW1E 6DE

Kate Barker
The Barker Review Team
Room 4/E1
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

fax 020 7944 8643
website www.cfit.gov.uk
Direct Line: 020 7944 8669
Email: chair.cfit@dft.gsi.gov.uk

3 August 2006

Dear Ms Barker

**COMMISSION FOR INTEGRATED TRANSPORT REPORT: SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT CHOICES AND THE RETAIL SECTOR**

I read with interest your interim report on the land-use planning system. The Commission, as Government's principal advisory body on transport, has a keen interest in the interaction between transport and spatial planning and the often competing drivers for economic development and protection of the environment. Given that all of these issues are so interestingly covered in your report, I would like to invite you to join Commissioners for dinner on 20 September to discuss your work and ours.

Our most recent report *Sustainable Transport Choices and the Retail Sector* (summary attached) considers the interaction between travel patterns and land use in the retail context. The report is based on primary research into the travel patterns of shoppers and their spending habits. This research produced a rich dataset, but two findings were key, in the view of the Commission:

- shoppers' spending owes more to their income than to their mode of travel and spend levels are not markedly dissimilar by mode on trips to the town / city centre;
- shoppers visiting out-of-town or edge-of-town retail centres do so overwhelmingly in their cars (82%).

Neither of these findings is revelatory. But the first provides useful hard evidence to inform the debate within the retail sector on the impact of measures to encourage alternatives to car trips and the second underlines the unsustainable nature of travel patterns out-of-town and edge-of-town retail.

Given the congestion and accessibility issues related to retail shopping trips and the importance of tackling climate change, the second finding convinces the Commission that the almost exclusively car-borne nature of shopping at edge-of-town and out-of-town retail sites is not sustainable and, if left

not attached -

unchecked, will have an increasing impact on the environment and congestion levels.

We suggest a range of measures in our report to combat this trend and support the current planning policy focus on town centre vitality. Our rationale is that the town centre has, or readily can have, the necessary transport infrastructure to provide for access by the majority of people in the community, including those without cars.

By contrast, the edge-of-town or out-of-town retail centres do not have the necessary infrastructure and cannot readily be served by public transport, given their dispersed customer base. Whilst road pricing (of which CfIT is a long-term advocate) has a great deal to offer, there will tend to be a residual problem of accessibility for these sites, since it will be difficult to serve these types of centre with adequate public transport alternative.

Whilst we support the broad thrust of planning policy, we are concerned that the speed at which the current land-use planning operates can delay desirable development. Commissioners have identified an issue of inadequate competition in respect of out-of-/edge-of-town sites, but feel that this is best addressed by a more responsive planning system which is able to provide prompt approval for high quality town centre development to provide choice and access for consumers, as opposed to relaxing restrictions on out-of-town development.

I am conscious that our recommendations cover issues which you yourself are investigating in your own analysis. Our Commissioners are drawn from a variety of business, Government and academic backgrounds and provide an interested, intelligent audience. I know that they would welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues with you at their dinner on 20 September.

If you are available to attend, please contact Brian Corbett of the CfIT Secretariat on 020 7944 8131 or Brian.Corbett@dft.gsi.gov.uk. I do hope that you can join us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hendy', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Hendy CBE