

# [Intro internet shopping, competition from out of town](https://assignbuster.com/intro-internet-shopping-competition-from-out-of-town/)

IntroThe UK’s city/town centres and the way in which retailing iscarried out is constantly changing. The drivers of this change reflect severaldifferent factors from alterations in the nature of consumer demand, toadvancements in how retailers provide a service, and sell their goods. Many ofthese centres are facing a multitude of challenges to their liveliness andlong-term sustainability, with reduced footfalls, reduced retail sales andresultant increased vacancies, brought about through the growth of internetshopping, competition from out of town parks etc.

It is the role of the localplanning authority to implement retail policies and manage their city/towncentres in order to address these situations, making retail areas as attractiveas possible to potential customers and businesses. Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland, and is located on theeast coast of the country. It is home to a significant amount of retailclusters such as Princes Street, George Street, Waverley Mall, St James’ Centreand the Royal Mile among others. In 2015, Edinburgh attracted 3. 85 millionvisitors, which generated £1.

32 billion. (ETAG, 2016) A substantial amount ofthis will have been retail expenditure, highlighting the importance for itsextensive retail network to be carefully governed by the city council to guideand coordinate the constant stream of development and investment. In this essay I will look at the issues that the retailmarket in Edinburgh faces, and how retail change and development on a whole isbeing managed by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). I will refer to thepolicies they have employed to deal with such issues and how planning hasshaped the retail market in the city. Scottish Planning PolicyScottish Planning Policy (SPP) is a statement of governmentpolicy on how nationally important land use planning matters should beaddressed across the country, with SPP8 concentrating on town centres and theiruses. It focuses on plan making, planning decisions and enabling high qualitydevelopments which promote efficient land use to increase sustainable economicgrowth. It states that local planning authorities should take appropriate stepsto engage with the communities, businesses, investors etc.

SPP works alongsidethe National Planning Framework (NPF3) as a shared long term vision fordevelopment and investment across Scotland for the next 30 years.  There are four main outcomes which explainhow planning should support this vision. Firstly, that developments need to bea “ successful, sustainable place”, supporting sustainable economic growth andregeneration.

Secondly, they need to be a “ low carbon place”, with steps inplace to reduce emissions. Thirdly, that they become a “ natural and resilientplace”, protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural assets and finally, thatdevelopments must be a “ more connected place”, supporting better transport anddigital connectivity. (SPP, 2006) (SPP, 2014, pg 2-7) (NPF3)Once the planning policy has been looked at on a nationalscale, it must then be adopted and used within the planning policy implementedby local authorities. The CEC have constructed their city planning frameworks, development plans, studies etc. adhering to the SPP and NPF. Once you get downto a local level, the policies which are in place are more specific to theEdinburgh city centre and the issues that it faces, as a pose to Scotland as anentity. There also becomes more of an individual focus on the different typesof development within the city, allowing us to understand the role the planningauthority has in managing, specifically, retail change.    Identifying the key issues In 2005, The Edinburgh Area Retail Needs Study (EARNS) wascommissioned by the council, to provide a forecast of future retail expendituretrends and what future development this may support.

This study found that thecity centre had not benefitted from the right proportion of investment withother areas in the city region seeing more modernised shopping facilities. Thestudy suggested that consumer spending would continue to grow, forecasting a45% increase in expenditure on non-food retailing by Lothian residents between2003 and 2015. There is an unmet demand from retailers for appropriate outletsin the city centre, that could be facilitated through new developments. Inkeeping with the NPF, any feasible projects should be strongly considered, placing priority on the city centre developments, in an attempt to sustain andenhance shopping experiences for residents and visitors. These findings showthat the revitalisation of the city centre should be made a priority, withpolicy RET3 from the structure plan stating that developments elsewhere whichundermine this status will be resisted. The EARNS study identified a target of 52, 500m2 of additional retail floorspace that should be aimed for in thecity centre, having only experienced a low amount of development and investmentat the time with 7% new floorspace. (EARNS, 2005) (Local Plan, pg 91-92, 2010)  Planning ControlsFollowing the study taken in 2005, it has become apparentthat steps need to be taken to encourage and support sustainable development inthe city centre, in keeping with the national framework and planning policy. Inorder for future developments to be approved, they must meet certainrequirements, (identified in Policy Ret 1 of the City Plan, page 93, 2010)Firstly, the proposal must “ provide high quality, commercially attractive units to a high standard of design that will strengthenthe role of Edinburgh as a regional shopping centre, safeguard historiccharacter and improve the appearance of the city”.

Developments should aim tomake the whole shopping experience more enjoyable, whilst keeping the buildingappropriate for its location. Secondly, the proposal must “ reinforce the retail vitalityof the shopping streets in the retail core”. The development should provide anoutlet full of energy and intrigue, not a dull or boring shop. The proposal must “ pay attention to upper floors which areanot to be used for retail purposes, and how these may be put to, or broughtinto beneficial uses which will enhance the public realm”. In this sense, theplanning authority are pushing for mixed use buildings, to add diversity andlook to adding interesting concepts into the city centre. The proposal must “ help create a safe and attractivepedestrian environment, safeguard historic character and improve the appearanceof the city centre including the public realm”. Whilst still maintaining thehistoric charm of the city, developments should create inviting and pleasantspaces which visitors will enjoy. These planning regulations are a clear method for how theCEC manage retail change in their city centre.

Through creating a list ofinstructions to which all retail developments must adhere, they are able to keepa strict control on what can and can’t be built. The status of the city hasbeen enhanced by developments such as in the St James’ Centre and individualconversions on George Street. However, to supply the demand that there is forretail units, the constraints of the historic city need to be addressed with adegree of creativity. New resolutions need to be investigated to create spaceswhilst ensuring that the sustainability of the city is protected. The success of the city centre as a retail market, does notonly depend upon the nature and quality of its shops but also on the appearanceand attractiveness of the shopping environment.

It must be accessible to itscustomer base through car parking and effective public transport, creatingconvenience and easy movement to, and within the city centre. Through creatinga multi-use city centre, with entertainment, leisure, hotel, office, housingfacilities available etc. and retail at the heart, Edinburgh could be more andmore competitive on a national scale. New retail development should be linkedclosely with improvements to the shopping environment and quality of thestreetscape.