

David Fitzsimons is available for comment on 087 2535482

## Change to guidelines on retail store size will increase prices and unemployment - Retail Excellence Ireland

21 November 2011 - The proposal to allow Walmart-type out-of-town retail developments, contained in the draft Retail Planning Guidelines, is extremely concerning and will impact on national competitiveness, according to Retail Excellence Ireland.

The Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government today published draft Retail Planning Guidelines for public consultation. The draft includes a proposal to increase the allowed size of convenience retail floorspace to 4000metres squared in Dublin, 3,500msq in Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford and 3,000msq for the remainder of the country.

David Fitzsimons, Chief Executive, Retail Excellence Ireland commented "The review finding recommending a substantial modification to the current planning cap (restricting the size of the store footprint) or the removal of the cap is a grave mistake and one which will impact on national competitiveness."

"This is an extremely concerning development as this policy will result in "Walmart" type out of town grocery anchored retail developments of scale being build. These developments will be grocery anchored and will carry most other product categories (electrical, fashion, books, music, pharmacy, telco, opticians et al.), will offer free parking and will simply replicate the high street in an out-of-town under one roof location.

"If lessons are learned from the UK and USA markets this planning policy will result in food oasis's (significant drive time to grocery shopping locations), a minority of operators taking very dominant market positions, increased consumer prices in the medium term and significant unemployment (most of these retail formats invest 5.5% in labour cost as opposed to the standard high street rate of 15%)."

**ENDS**

**For further information contact:**

Cian Connaughton, MKC Communications – 087 6480809  
David Fitzsimons, Retail Excellence Ireland – 087 2535482

### **About Retail Excellence Ireland**

Retail Excellence Ireland is the largest retail industry group in Ireland with over 8,500 store members employing over 110,000 people.