

CULTURE, TOURISM AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 24A

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Support for the Retail Sector
Date of Meeting: 29 September 2011
Report of: Strategic Director Place
Contact Officer: Name: Tom Hook Tel: 291110
E-mail: tom.hook@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The 'Streets Ahead' event in early 2011 brought together local traders, large chains, council officers and campaign groups to look at how support Brighton and Hove's unique retail offer. The issues raised at this meeting, and outlined in this report need to be progressed.
- 1.2 The Leader of Council, whilst answering questions at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (OSC), suggested that scrutiny would present an ideal, cross-party and inclusive mechanism through which this initiative could be driven forward.
- 1.3 CTEOSC is the relevant scrutiny committee and therefore Members are being asked to consider this request.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members agree to undertake a scrutiny panel into support for the retail sector as set out in this report.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Possible Scope

- Evidenced based review of the state of the retail sector in the City and current public policy and practice
- Practical recommendations to the retail sector, the Council, and the Local Strategic Partnership addressing relevant operational policy, investment, regulation and city management matters
- Aim to produce recommendations to help position the retail economy over the medium-long term and pushing forward the city's retail offer to visitors, local residents, and the work based community.

3.2 Current Challenges

3.3 The City's independent retail offer is a key dimension to the City's visitor economy and there are concerns that it is not being sufficiently nurtured and supported.

3.4 Feedback from local independent retailers indicates that they feel under threat from the economic situation and competition with larger multiples. Sections of the local community are hostile to certain retail investors and brands.

3.5 Existing retail bodies are finding it difficult to get a comprehensive City-wide buy-in, particularly from independents, to fund area improvements. Local retailers have expectations that the local authority can provide solutions to their trading viability which the local authority cannot always address, not least due to current resource constraints. Additionally the responsiveness of LA to addressing legitimate retail issues is not always evident & recognised.

3.6 Draft objectives for discussion

3.7 With margins in the retail sector squeezed, development financiers cautious about committing to major redevelopment schemes and City Council resources also under pressure, there are obvious limitations to the outcomes that can be realised by a scrutiny panel in the short term.

3.8 There are also a number of initiatives and forums already in place which are contributing to the health and well being of the City's retail offer or are otherwise influencing public policy. The work of a scrutiny panel may draw upon this but should avoid unnecessary duplication.

Objectives	Success Criteria
B&H's unique retail offer to local residents and visitors is nurtured & improved.	a. Key facts & analysis on retail performance are available to chart performance on an annual basis.
The independent retail sector is effectively self organised & is able to	b. The independent sector confirms it has the organisation in place to

mediate positive outcomes with retail multiples and larger chain stores.	effectively represent its interests & can confirm a constructive dialogue with multiple & chain store representatives.
The City's retail offer is effectively marketed & promoted with clear input and feedback from & to local independent traders.	c. Marketing resources are effectively coordinated to optimise the short-medium term viability and the long term sustainability of the City's retail offer.
The retailers, landlords, prospective developers and agents are able to effectively develop the City's retail offer & influence public policy makers, investment & service providers.	d. Retail trade & Council/LSP survey results indicate positive working relationships.
The City's public realm is maintained and improved to support the commercial performance of retail locations.	e. The City's retail offer is appropriately supported by innovative regulation & sustainable investment & maintenance of the public realm, transport system & city infrastructure.
Local retailers understand public sector regulation and enabling capacity and are able to easily access information and expertise.	f. Effective communication & information systems are in place to enable effective public sector responses to the retail sector.

3.9 Potential Witnesses

- Cllr Amy Kennedy, Cabinet Member
- Geoff Raw, Strategic Director Place
- Independent sector representatives
- Multiple/Chain representative
- Town centre manager
- BID representative
- Public order rep
- Retail sector analyst
- Food partnership?
- Economic development expert
- Urban design specialist
- City regulation (Planning, Licensing, Trading Standards, Public Health)
- Transport, Parking & City infrastructure representatives

3.10 Suggested timetable

November 2011:

Session 1 – Scoping Meeting

- TOR
- Trend & statistical analysis
- Challenges & opportunities
- Agreeing deliverables

December 2011/January 2012:

Session 2 & 3 - Barriers to success & potential solutions from public & private sectors:

- Perspectives from retail investment experts
- Messages from local independents
- Messages from locally operating multiples & chains
- Retail landlord & developer perspectives
- Public sector regulation, investment & service provision (Govt. & Council perspectives)

February/March 2012: Draft report of findings & recommendations to CTEOSC

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 No consultation has been undertaken in drafting this report.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 Any review would be supported with resources from the existing scrutiny budget.

Legal Implications:

5.2 Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to establish panels to review specific issues.

Equalities Implications:

5.3 There are none directly arising from this report. Any panel methodology will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are none directly arising from this report.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are none directly arising from this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 There are none directly arising from this report.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 There are none directly arising from this report.