

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 7

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Support for the Retail Sector		
Date of Meeting:	16 July 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Resources		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Tom Hook	Tel: 29-1110
	Email:	tom.hook@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report details the findings of the Scrutiny Panel established to examine the support needed by independent retailers in the city.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Panel's report is re-printed as Appendix 1 to this report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Members endorse the report of the Scrutiny Panel on Support for the Retail Sector and agree to refer the report recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee, requesting that a lead officer be given responsibility for responding to all the recommendations.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Panel comprised Councillors Gill Mitchell (Chair), Phelim Mac Cafferty and Carol Theobald. It was established to progress the issues raised from the Streets Ahead event in 2011. This brought together local independents, large chain stores and council officers to look at how to support the city's retail offer.
- 3.2 The Panel focused on how independents could be supported through the economic downturn, partnership working with chain stores, effective marketing, landlords and commercial agents developing the retail sector, how regulations and advice could be accessed more easily and how street markets could have a more positive impact for retailers.
- 3.3 In the course of its investigations, the Panel talked with local retailers, experts, multiples, commercial agents, council officers and others. The Panel also received evidence via e-mail and various types of social media.
- 3.4 Common issues which arose from the evidence included the increase in parking charges, business rates and rents, street markets, the need for a town centre strategy, support with running a business, more flexibility with planning regulations governing the introduction of retail quarters. The panel agreed 14 recommendations. The full panel report is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 No formal consultation was undertaken in preparing this report, although some of the witnesses who gave evidence to the panel were asked for their comments and these have been used to inform the final version.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The financial implications from the reports recommendations will be highlighted when reported through to Policy and Resources Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Anne Silley *Date: 29/06/12*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 In accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules, once OSC has agreed the Panel's recommendations it will prepare a report and submit it to the Chief Executive for consideration at the relevant policy committee.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon *Date: 29/06/12*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Scrutiny Panel process was fully scoped. In responding to each of the recommendations, equalities implications should be addressed.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 None identified.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 None identified.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 None identified.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 None identified.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 issues raised within the report should be put forward into the City Plan and other relevant city wide consultations.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 None identified.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The report needs approving by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before it is referred to the Policy & Resources Committee.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1. Support for the Retail Sector Scrutiny Report.