

ENTERPRISE, EMPLOYMENT & MAJOR PROJECTS CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 50

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Deputation		
Date of Meeting:	23 March 2009		
Report of:	Acting Director of Strategy & Governance		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Caroline De Marco	Tel: 29-1063
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	Various		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 To receive the following deputation presented at Council on 29 January 2009, and any other deputations presented directly to the Enterprise, Employment and Major Projects Cabinet Member Meeting.

1.2 (a) Deputation concerning London Road

Ms Christina Summers (Spokesperson)

St. James's Investments (SJI) has been steadily buying up property along the London Road and has produced proposals for regenerating the area ostensibly based on two public consultations. Brighton & Hove City Council has an ongoing 'Masterplan' for this area that lays down definite parameters for any regeneration proposal. 'Another London Road' Campaign (ALR) is concerned that SJI is not only ignoring these parameters, but is also pursuing a pre-planned agenda that includes a Tesco superstore which does not reflect the needs and wishes of the local residents and businesses.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Cabinet Member receive the deputation and determine what action, if any, should be taken.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 An extract from the proceedings of the council meeting, together with a copy of the supporting document of two pages that was included with

the deputation in accordance with the procedural rules is detailed as follows:

“As you will know proposals by developers, St James’s Investments, for London Road publicised in the summer of last year include a 3-storey Tesco Superstore incorporating a hundred thousand square foot of food and non-food retail space, a car park of at least 950 spaces and other retail, commercial and residential development. The developers’ own consultation never asked the community whether or not they would like a Tesco store or car park.

Another London Road, a voluntary group of local residents and stakeholders, however, continually consult with the public using hand delivered leaflets, street stalls, one line feedback and comments on Facebook and to their email address and hosted a drop-in meeting in July last year, which alone attracted 150 people in just two hours. We ask what people like and dislike about London Road and what they want and don’t want in the future. The vision that emerges is of a vibrant, diverse shopping street with interest and character, less traffic and more pedestrianisation and greenery, a thriving open market, arts and community facilities and a secure base for creative, local businesses. Many say that with its four existing supermarkets London Road does not need a fifth.

Another London Road has today, as you know, submitted a petition signed by 1,067 people. We can also report that our Facebook group has 536 members and our on-line mailing list has 270.

Most people agree that improvements to London Road are needed and it is easy to assume that the increase in shoppers coming to the area for the new store will benefit existing shops and businesses but with this all in one model shoppers are effectively encouraged to drive to the store, do all their shopping under one roof, then drive straight home again and many local traders fear this is inevitable.

Statistically, since Tesco gets £1 in every £8 of all retail sales they are able to sell almost anything they choose. Those traders on London Road selling groceries, bread, meat, books, newspapers, DVDs, consumer electronics, mobile phones, clothing and at least 18 other goods or services within 500 metres of the proposed new store will see direct competition from this retail giant.

When a supermarket opens its competitors’ shops close because they cannot compete on price and there is a net job loss, as has been the case in Hove following the 2003 Tesco superstore opening. The importance of small shops to local jobs is reinforced by the council’s very own high profile ‘buy local’ campaign which stresses how local shops and producers are a vital part of Brighton & Hove’s local economy and its unique character and diversity.

St James’s Investments’ proposals are in direct conflict with the council’s London Road Central Masterplan. Their plans would involve demolishing New England House with no clear provision for those

small businesses currently occupying it. The new car park is clearly aimed to encourage more people to drive to the London Road and can only serve to worsen congestion and air quality and no amount of flow improvement can hide that. Furthermore, the council's retail study 2006 recommends that, and I quote, 'proposed development should be of a scale appropriate to the function of the town centre'.

We have got three requests please to put to the council.

Firstly, we ask Councillors to recognise that there is considerable feeling against the current St James's Investments' proposal and to acknowledge the validity of and support for an improved London Road which does not include a new supermarket or car park.

Secondly, we call on the council to accept the evidence that a new supermarket in London Road is highly likely to result in a net job loss and bring about the closure of existing small shops which the council is so keen to support. We have also asked for acknowledgement that it puts the historic open market very much at risk.

Thirdly and finally, we ask that Another London Road be recognised as a group generally representing a significant proportion of the community and therefore consulted and kept informed on any matter affecting the development of the area."

RESPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR KEMBLE

"Brighton & Hove City Council has indeed written up and has consulted widely on a Supplementary Planning Document for the London Road Central area. This document will set out the council's planning policy for the area but council has been made aware by St James's Investments that they will not be submitting any proposals for the area until the Supplementary Planning Document has been published and adopted.

All proposals that come forward from whatever source for any development within the area will be assessed against the prevailing planning framework.

The draft Supplementary Planning Document is currently being finalised in response to the information received from the consultations and conducted as part of the process for preparing the document. The draft SPD will be published for public consultation in spring 2009. Could I ask you to ensure that your organisation takes a full and active part in the consultation when it is released. I am sure you can appreciate that I can't comment on any potential planning application."

Supporting Documentation

‘Another London Road’ Summary of Feedback:

“What would you like changed in London Road?”

From leaflets, stall comment book and public meeting of 22 July 2008 held at Calvary Evangelical Church, Preston Circus

Retail

Open Market: develop, invest, expand and cover. Include local/farmers’ produce.
Retain diversity

Shops: small, diverse, variety, unique, affordable. Enough supermarkets already. No more large chains or supermarkets. More restaurants.

Co-op Building: use as a department store or for small shops/businesses: indoor market.

Retain and enhance historical shop fronts.

Commercial/ Housing

Keep **New England House** for its small business and historical value

Vantage Point: affordable rents for creative industries

Encourage **local businesses** and co-operatives

Housing co-operatives/affordable housing

Traffic and Transport

Reduce traffic by encouraging alternatives:

Pedestrianisation, wider pavements, fewer obstructions, pedestrian routes linking to other areas and separated from traffic. More favourable pedestrian crossings.

Cycling: segregated cycle lane

Buses: more imaginative bus routes, possibly using area behind station as terminus

Park and Ride if feasible

Environment/ Cultural/ Community

More **trees**

Open spaces to sit – pocket parks

Safe **playground**

Better **toilets**

Public **Art**

Sports and Leisure

Graffiti

London Road Festival

The Impact of the Supermarket: Factsheet

- Every £10 spent in a local food initiative is worth £25 to the local economy because small local food businesses support other local businesses. The same £10 spent in a supermarket produces just £14 worth of benefits for the local community, as money is diverted out of the area to distant shareholders.
Joanna Blythman, Shopped, 2004
- In 2004, small, family-owned business took £42,000 worth of turnover to create a job. Superstores took an average of £95,000 of sales to create a single job.
Andrew Simms, Tescopoly, 2007
- Research funded by the supermarkets themselves shows that new stores do not result in new jobs but in job losses: an average of 276 jobs are lost when a new supermarket opens with strong evidence that new out-of-centre superstores have a negative net impact on retail employment up to 15km away.
Sam Porter and Paul Raistrick, The Impact of Out-of-Centre Food Superstores on Local Retail Employment, The National Retail Planning Forum, c/o Corporate Analysis, Boots Company Plc., Nottingham
- Between 1997 and 2002, specialist stores like butchers, bakers and fishmongers shut at the rate of fifty per week. Nearly one third of unaffiliated independent stores closed between 2000 and 2006. Just under 2,500 food, beverage and tobacco wholesalers were lost in the decade to 2002, with wholesalers closing at the rate of 6 per week in the two years up to 2003. Also, traditional pubs are closing at a rate of 20 per week, largely because they cannot compete with the cheap alcohol sold in supermarkets.
Andrew Simms, Ghost Town Britain & Ghost Town Britain II, New Economics Foundation. 2002/2003 VAT registered businesses, Department of Trade and Industry
Campaign for Real Ale
- In a Guardian report on the impact of a 24-hour Tesco on traders in a run-down area of Oldham a year after opening, only one trader reported a slight increase in business after the store opened – a shoe-repair, key cutting and dry cleaning business not facing direct competition from Tesco. Other traders saw declines.
The Guardian, 8 October 2008:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/oct/08/regeneration.tesco.communities>
- Supermarkets' supply and distribution chains have a significant negative impact on the environment, importing food that can easily be grown in this country. For example, at the height of the UK apple season under half of the apples on offer in the big four supermarkets were home-grown. This increases food miles and has had a devastating effect on the British farming industry.
Friends of the Earth media briefing 'British Apples for Sale'. Nov 2002
- A 2000 Competition Commission report on supermarkets concluded that Tesco, and other supermarkets, “operates against the public interest” by being “engaged in the practice of persistently selling some frequently purchased products below cost”, and “varying prices in different geographical locations in the light of local competitive conditions, such variation not being related to costs” – in other words dropping prices to undercut competitors, then raising them again later.
Joanna Blythman, Shopped, 2004.

