

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 2 -RETAIL EXPERIENCE

Wednesday, 25 April 2012

COUNCILLORS Councillor Matthew Lynch (Chair), Councillors Tony Ansell, Sally
PRESENT: Beardsworth, Elizabeth Gowen and Dennis Meredith
Officers Marion Goodman Head of Customers and Cultural Services
Tracy Tiff Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Joanne Birkin Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Suresh Patel.

At this point the Chair suggested that it would be useful for a Vice Chair to be elected for the life of this Review. It was therefore proposed and seconded that Councillor Suresh Patel be appointed Vice Chair of Scrutiny Panel 2 (Retail Experience). Upon a vote it was

AGREED: That Councillor Suresh Patel be appointed Vice Chair of the Panel.

2. DEPUTATIONS/ PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

Councillor Tony Ansell declared a Personal interest as the proprietor of the All Saints Bistro in the Town Centre.

This interest is for the life of the Review.

4. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Panel considered a report on the scoping of the Customer Services Review.

The main points of the discussion were as follows: -

Purpose /Objectives of the Review.

- Members felt that there were many proposed changes to the Town Centre coming up and that this review gave them the opportunity to influence decisions and make the most of the new opportunities.

Information Required.

- Members felt that it was vital to examine the improvement that BID makes to the Town Centre Street Scene.
- Part of the baseline data should include a definition of the Town Centre, numbers of shop types and vacancy rates.
- Members considered that other Councillors and Officers should be sent a short questionnaire asking them why they go to shop and what they liked about it.
- Members had some suggestions for site visits, such as Market Harborough, and agreed that they would take other suggestions from the Town Centre Manager as to other locations, particularly town centres that are vibrant and successful. They also considered that it would be useful to visit any developments which Legal and General had developed in the last few years.
- Members also considered that the impact of car parking changes should be considered.

Format of Information.

- Members considered that it would be useful to ask the Chair of the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Association to attend to give evidence.
- Members also felt that the work of the Community Safety Partnership had been central to the improving the town centre dealing with problems from beggars etc. They therefore thought that the Community Safety Partnership Manger should also be invited to come and give evidence.
- Sheridan New, the former manager of the Grosvenor Centre was suggested as co-optee. He will be approached after Overview and Scrutiny Committee has formally approved the scope.
- The Market Chairman, Raymond Martin be invited to join the Panel as a Co-optee.

AGREED That the Scope of the Review as attached at Appendix A will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28th May 2012 for approval.

The meeting concluded at 6:42 pm



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To investigate how NBC can support the town centre business community.
- To investigate how NBC can support local businesses throughout the development period of any major building projects in and close by to the town centre (i.e. Grosvenor; bus interchange; university accommodation etc).
- To identify and examine good practice from other boroughs
- To identify ways to develop greater involvement / engagement with local, regional and national businesses in public land improvement initiatives

2. Outcomes Required

- To enhance the retail experience to attract new visitors / shoppers and increase the number of return visits to the town centre
- To provide short, medium and long term recommendations, which supports and develops the retail experience.

3. Information Required

- Context:
 - Local statistics
 - Demographics – local and national
- Baseline data:
 - National statistics
 - Definition of the Town Centre
 - Vision for the Town Centre
- Synopses of various research documents and other published documents

- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Evidence from residents
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Best practice data
- Site visits
- Desktop research

4. Format of Information

- Officer reports/presentations
- Baseline data such as:
 - Performance data - town centre footfall
 - Vacancy rates
 - Numbers and types of retail within the town
 - Car park usage
- Published reports (precis's) such as:
 - The Portas Review
 - The Right to Retail: Can Localism save Britain's small retailers
 - Understanding High Street Performance
 - Core Strategy – Northampton's Strategic Planning Policies
 - Sustainable Community Strategy
- NBC – Cabinet Member (Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise) evidence
- NBC – Cabinet Member (Environment)
- Evidence from Northampton BID
- Evidence from Mr Overall, former Director, Northampton BID
- Evidence from various local businesses and retailers
- Evidence from NCC - Highways
- Evidence from Northampton Community Forums
- Evidence from Enterprise Management Services
- Evidence from Northants Police
- Evidence from Neighbourhood Warden (town centre), NBC
- Evidence from ACTM
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Evidence from Councillors regarding their shopping experience
- Evidence from the Chair, of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association
- Evidence from the Community Safety Manager, NBC
- Evidence from University of Northampton
- Expert advice
- Best practice
- Witness interviews/evidence

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research
- Site Visits (if applicable)
- Officer reports
- Presentations
- Examples of best practice
- Witness Evidence:-
 - Key Partners as detailed in section 4 of this scope
 - Northampton Town Centre BID
 - Northampton Chamber of Commerce
 - Key Officers – Northampton Borough Council
 - Key Officers – Northamptonshire County Council
 - Cabinet Member (Regeneration, Planning and Enterprise) – Northampton Borough Council
 - Cabinet Member (Environment) – Northampton Borough Council
 - Surveyors/Valuers
 - Director, EMS

6. Co-Options to the Review

- Sheridan New, former Manager, Grosvenor Centre, and Simon Rushden, Legal and General to be approached suggesting that she is co opted to this Review for its life.

7 Equality Impact Screening Assessment

- An Equality Impact Screening Assessment to be undertaken on the scope of the Review

8 Evidence gathering Timetable

April 2012 to April 2013

- 25 April 2012 - Scoping Meeting
- 27 June – Evidence gathering
- 5 July - Evidence gathering
- 8 August – Evidence gathering
- 18 October – Evidence gathering
- 5 December – Evidence gathering

- 14 February 2013 – Evidence gathering (if required)
- 24 April – Approval of final report

Various site visits will be programmed during this period if required.

Meetings to commence at 6.00 pm

7. Responsible Officers

Lead Officer Marion Goodman, Head of Customer and Cultural Services

Co-ordinator Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

8. Resources and Budgets

Marion Goodman, Head of Customer and Cultural Services, to provide internal advice.

9 Final report presented by:

Completed by 24 April 2013. Presented by the Chair of the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then to Cabinet.

10 Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months (January/February 2013)