



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 2– RETAIL EXPERIENCE

27TH JUNE 2012

BRIEFING NOTE: POTENTIAL SITE VISITS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Panel, at its initial scoping meeting, agreed that there was a need for site visits to take place so that a comparison could be made with other town centres against that of Northampton.

2 Information

- 2.1 In assessing Northampton with other towns there is a need to ensure that the Panel compares like for like.
- 2.2 It is highlighted that towns such as Corby, Market Harborough and Rugby are not 'like for like' in terms of offer, size, catchment and make-up, therefore what may work in smaller towns will not necessarily be deliverable in Northampton. The same can be said about larger cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and London.
- 2.3 Northampton's family tree towns are Cambridge, Chesterfield, Colchester, Derby, Dudley, Ipswich, Luton, Norwich, Peterborough, Stoke, Swindon and Walsall. These being towns or cities with similar populations. It is highlighted that Cambridge is very much perceived a university city.
- 2.4 There is a need for the Panel to assess the offer, profile, image and catchment in order to fully understand the differences and the attraction of the comparator towns.

3 Site visit proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Panel undertakes two site visits, selected from the list detailed in paragraph 2.3 above and reports back its findings to a future meeting.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 That the Panel selects two towns from those detailed in paragraph 2.3 above but when making its selection is mindful that that Cambridge is very much perceived as a university city.
- 4.2 That the Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Panel, arranges two site visits, during July/August and late September.

- 4.3 That the purpose of the site visits is for the Panel to assess the offer of the city/town centre, profile, image and catchment.
- 4.4 That a report back on the findings of the site visits be presented to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Panel.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Matt Lynch, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 2 – Retail Experience

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