



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – RETAIL EXPERIENCE

14 February 2013

BRIEFING NOTE: SITE VISIT TO THE GROSVENOR CENTRE, NORTHAMPTON

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Panel on 27th June 2012, it was agreed that site visits take place so that a comparison could be made with other town centres against that of Northampton.
- 1.2 Recently, it was suggested by a member of the Panel, and agreed by the Chair, that it would be useful for a site visit to the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton, to take place on a similar basis to the visits to:
 - Peterborough
 - Norwich
 - Market Harborough
 - Milton Keynes
- 1.3 Councillor Tony Ansell visited the Grosvenor Centre on Monday 11 February 2013 and was accompanied by the Corporate Asset Manager and Scrutiny Officer. Discussions were held with the Grosvenor Centre Manager, Russell Hall.

2 Information

- 2.1 The Grosvenor Centre is generally clean, open and airy with a nice ambiance. Although a little dated a pleasant shopping experience was created. Seating areas are in situ in both the upper and lower malls. The Centre Manager advised that he was in discussions regarding a possible refresh of the malls to make the Centre more contemporary and sustainable.
- 2.2 There were a number of rubbish bins available for shoppers' use. Mats are available at each entrance but it was noticed that the tiled flooring did become slippery.
- 2.3 Upon arrival there were not many shoppers around but this was expected as it was a snowy Monday morning. Towards the end of the site visit there were a lot more people present.

- 2.4 Security staff, wearing smart uniforms, are visible with the Centre. The site visit observed cleaning of the centre being carried out, both on the upper and lower malls. The Grosvenor Centre Manager advised that he encourages staff to extend cleaning outside the centre, under the canopy area onto Abington Street (that is not owned by the Centre).
- 2.5 Children's rides were available on the lower mall and these were being used.
- 2.6 Detailed at Appendix A are various photographs of the Grosvenor Centre, Northampton.
- 2.7 The Grosvenor Centre has its own [webpage](#) , which includes details of:

Shops
Location map
Events
News

3 Retail Units

- 3.1 A number of vacant retail units were seen within the Grosvenor Centre, but the Centre Manager advised that some new lettings were likely to be completed shortly.

Range of Retail Units

- 3.2 The range of retail units within the Grosvenor Centre include:

- Boots
- HMV
- Disney Store
- Sainsbury's
- New Look
- WH Smith
- I Store
- Pandora
- Body Shop
- Nationwide Building Society
- Superdrug
- Monsoon
- House of Frazer
- BHS
- H Samuel
- Superdry
- Millie's Cookies
- Michael Jones Jewellers
- Warren James
- Diechmann Shoes
- Vision Express
- Costa Coffee
- McDonalds

- Ernest Jones
- Card Factory
- Burton's
- Poundworld
- Kiss Cards
- Costa Coffee
- Claire's Accessories
- Mr Simms Sweet Shop
- The Perfume Shop

3.3 The Centre Manager advised that organisations have to adhere to strict criteria should they want to promote their services within the Grosvenor Centre.

4 Toilet Facilities

4.1 The toilet area is clean and easily accessible.

5 Signage

5.1 Clear signage was in place in the Grosvenor Centre, examples within Appendix A.

6 Events

6.1 The Centre Manager liaises with Northampton Borough Council regarding events and potential events to ensure there is no duplication and whether work can be done together on certain events. Staff at the Grosvenor Centre have a dialogue with the University of Northampton regarding fashion presence.

6.2 Initiatives to enhance the retail experience take place, for example a local jeweller took part in a recent "red rose" promotion.

6.3 Prior to the festive season, space is made available in the Grosvenor Centre for the Christmas present wrapping charity event.

7 Footfall

7.1 The Grosvenor Centre Manager confirmed that annual footfall is 11.5 million. Footfall on Sundays had increased with the offer of free parking on Sundays. The street fair that took place in October 2012 had a positive impact on footfall, but not all retailers outside the Centre had co-ordinated opening times to take advantage of that.

8 Grosvenor Centre – car parking

8.1 The car park is owned and maintained by the Council. Major renewal work to the car park, including re-waterproofing and resurfacing was carried out approximately 18 months ago. More recently there have been lighting upgrade works.

8.2 During the visit to the car park area, some lights were not working. A boarded up window was observed, as was an out of date maintenance

sign. Councillor Ansell felt that the area around the lift could benefit from a deep clean. The advertising boards inside the lifts were empty.

9 Recommendations

- 9.1 That the information gathered from the site visit to the Grosvenor Centre be used to inform the Panel's evidence base.