

Report to: EDCL Scrutiny Panel - 22 October 2014

Report by: Councillor Julie Swan, Chair of EDCL Scrutiny Panel

Title: The Future of UK High Streets: Driving Local Growth and Regeneration

I attended the conference along with Claire Upton-Brown, City Development Manager, on 18 September in London, to bring back ideas to the panel for their consideration. Penny Mordaunt MP was the 1st speaker, as High Streets Minister, who referred to the Cosham Traders Association and how they had helped to rejuvenate Cosham High Street. The contribution of Tony Coombes, owner of a Key Cutting business in Cosham was highlighted.

Delegates were directed to the **Great British High Street** website:

www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk who are running a campaign called 'Love your local market'.

This campaign has helped to rejuvenate many local high streets and provides ideas that have worked in the past to help increase footfall.

There is a **Christmas Market Action Day** campaign to be held nationally on December 6th, also accessible from the same link as above. Need further information on this.

Ideas raised to help stimulate **market days**:

- Free Parking
- Youth Markets (encourage young traders by promoting reduced price young traders licenses)
- Combine youth theatre and dance on youth market days
- Themed Market Days
- Encourage traders by setting stall costs at £10 per table and reduce table size to 6ft maximum
- Night time Markets to encourage evening economy

Problems that affect shopping areas and reduce footfall:

- Business Rates
- Tatty shop fronts
- No 'main draw'
- Too many hot food takeaways

Can hot food takeaways be restricted, especially close to schools?

Ideas for tackling Tatty Shop Fronts -

- (i) **Art projects** - if businesses sign up to this then we could potentially look at some sort of art project, perhaps in conjunction with the University/Local Artists to 'paint' shutters so that when shops are closed the area looks good (refer to article called "Culture on the High Street").
- (ii) Also check out a scheme called '**nominate your neighbourhood**' which ran a Street Art Programme via The Londonist (online paper) - the Street Art increased footfall by 75%.

Main Draw -

- (i) Key shops
- (ii) Community attractions can include a Medical/Health Centre

- (iii) Attract shoppers via a '**Makers Emporium**' where closed premises are re-opened to allow micro business artisans to have a stall/area within the space where they can sell their own produced wares. These premises would need to be properly run by an experienced Retail/Store Manager who would be there to assist the business owners with how to display and sell goods whilst advising on invoicing and receipts etc. (everything that being a store manager generally entails). These 'artisans' can be encouraged to gain their own shops by reducing rates on empty properties in the area for a period of time after which they have established and grown too big for the Emporium. Thus ensuring a flow of local companies and helping to give people a hand to move from small home units to retail sales.
- (iv) Keep key services such as tax offices and **housing offices** on local high streets to encourage local footfall - give people a reason to come to the high street, need to find attractions that match the needs of the local community. Obviously these will differ by area.
- (v) **Pop up shops** - Check out a scheme called Pop Up Britain, has its own programme manager. Used local colleges to encourage students studying businesses to come up with business ideas and get them out into the local area. Can easily combine with business projects as long as sufficient business mentoring takes place.

Other issues raised for future exploration by the panel:

Promotions - Shop Local/Use it Lose it campaigns. Also the potential for artisan shops within certain areas to get together to offer an e-business although I would expect that this would really only work in the Palmerston/Albert Road areas so not suitable for this project.

Transport - links to footfall and bus routes.

Loss of retail units - Potential to use landlord licensing schemes to prevent shops being converted if the premises have flats above them.

Personal ideas for further discussion with EDCL Panel:

- Does the Pompey Community Bus ever visit Cosham/Paulsgrove area?
- **Moveable exhibitions** - the City Museum runs exhibitions for differing periods of time which often prove very popular with residents and attracts people from outside the area. The current project concerns WW1 where people can even research their own local family during the war. Is there a possibility that information from these exhibitions (not valuable pieces) could be reduced in size and reduced to fit into an average vacant shop unit? There is a potential to open two additional 'museum' type shops in Paulsgrove and Cosham. Exhibitions could be changed on a regular basis as the Museum changes and updates its displays - if we started with WW1 and gave people the opportunity to research their families, encouraging local schools to visit in smaller groups people would get used to them being there - if they are rotated every 3 months it also gives people something different to visit. Are there any PCC owned premises in these areas suitable? Is there an allowance in the CDL/Planning and Regeneration budgets to allow for such a scheme?

- **Software for local traders** to sell their products online for delivery called Open High Street - but this does depend on local traders actually getting together as people would shop the various stores and have one delivery from all combined.

Research shows that for every £10 spent with a local business £8 of that is spent within the local community as opposed to shopping with large stores online.

Councillor Julie Swan,
Chair Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel