



# Portsmouth CITY COUNCIL

## *Economic Development, Culture & Leisure* *Scrutiny Panel*

**REVITALISING LOCAL HIGH STREETS AND SECONDARY SHOPPING AREAS  
IN THE CITY**

**Date published: 18 March 2015**

**Under the terms of the council's constitution, reports prepared by a scrutiny panel should be considered formally by the cabinet or the relevant cabinet member within a period of eight weeks, as required by Rule 11(a) of the Policy & Review Procedure Rules.**

## Chair's Preface

The Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel undertook a review in the municipal year 2014-2015 of which the aim was to look into "Revitalising Local High Streets and Secondary Shopping Areas in the City".

Upon undertaking this review the panel learned that the tertiary shopping areas within the City Boundaries are many, unique and varied and that a 'one size fits all' strategy would be inappropriate.

Taking evidence from various witnesses the panel has drawn its conclusions and put forward recommendations to try to increase footfall and trade in these areas.

Following a meeting with the Ministry for High Streets it is encouraging to note that in those areas where a 'Boots' shop is present that any local Traders Associations should be encouraged to speak with this company as they have made a promise to work with Local High Streets to encourage and increase footfall and that the Town Centres Management Team is working with other local areas and the Ministry for High Streets to encourage best practice.

Additionally as part of this review the complexity of the Portsmouth City Council 'Event Application Form' was raised and the panel are pleased to note that this has now been changed to make it much easier for local groups and traders to hold events in their areas.

I would like to convey my sincere thanks, on behalf of the panel, to everyone who helped by contributing to this report. In particular I would like to extend my thanks to sources including, but not limited to the traders from Albert Road, Castle Road and Fratton Road Trades Associations, Portsmouth Cycle Forum, Strong Island, Penny Mordaunt MP (who in turn put us in touch with officers from the Ministry for High Streets) and Members and Officers of Portsmouth City Council for their time, considerable knowledge and information which has greatly assisted and aided this report.

On a personal note I would additionally like to thank my fellow panel members: Cllr Winnington (Vice Chair), Cllr Boshier, Cllr Dowling, Cllr Hockaday and Cllr Hunt and particularly Joanne Wildsmith for their support and contributions.

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Councillor Julie Swan  
Chair, Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel  
Date: 18 March 2015

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# REVITALISING LOCAL HIGH STREETS AND SECONDARY SHOPPING AREAS IN THE CITY

## 1. Purpose and Objectives

This review was to consider how to support a vast array of retail offers in the city and how to make an attractive environment to encourage visitor loyalty and footfall.

The three objectives were:

- i) To understand the different characteristics of the local retail centres and the planning policy, licensing and other restrictions to development
- ii) To consider the success of promotional activities, grant opportunities and initiatives in generating and retaining customers
- iii) To review the sustainability of these centres within communities with a diversity of retail, leisure and health uses

## 2. Executive Summary

### **Objective 1 - To understand the different characteristics of the local retail centres and the planning policy, licensing and other restrictions to development**

The panel firstly looked at the context of the shopping patterns for the main shopping centres, in response to the competition of internet shopping, and their economic importance to the city. It was recognised that the secondary retail centres need to have an affinity with their local communities to secure their loyalty to succeed.

The deregulation of the planning regime has meant that changes in uses of properties can take place under permitted development rights. The LGA has been campaigning against these rights and for payday lenders and betting shops to be removed from the A2 (Financial Services) use to give local councils greater controls on the spread of these in the retail centres and thereby having greater influence on the shopping environment.

The Council's Licensing unit works with the Events Team in considering applications for events that can include entertainment, drinking hours and street consents and the licensing regime is also subject to deregulation. The Licensing Manager has discretion regarding extending hours for temporary events that traders may wish to apply for, such as themed markets and festivals.

The panel received data relating to void units in the secondary shopping areas which showed a relatively low occurrence in the retail areas. They received information on the empty property rates and exemptions and how this related to charities. There had been concern, voiced by traders, that landlords, including those not living in the city, may neglect their vacant properties which affects the street environment. The remit and powers of the council's Eyesores Working Party were explained, with discussion taking place with landlords to try to seek improvement to dilapidated properties. Those retail units owned by the city council have protected business

tenancies and when they are vacant there is a set criteria for re-letting which includes the wider community benefits.

**Objective 2 - To consider the success of promotional activities, grant opportunities and initiatives in generating and retaining customers**

During the course of the review the panel was pleased to receive a draft copy of the revised event application form which had been simplified and reduced to 4 pages which would be easier for event organisers to complete. Members noted the principles of the Purple Flag accreditation scheme relating to the safe night-time economy as whilst this had not been pursued (as it would require further resources for implementation) there were elements that were reflected within this review such as ensuring a broad appeal, to extend arts and culture to the retail areas.

The Chair of the panel attended the Future of UK High Streets conference and she and the Vice Chair spoke with the High Streets minister and local MP Penny Mordaunt to explore initiatives that were successful elsewhere. Ideas to encourage visits to local shops including stimulation of market days, exploring 'makers emporiums' and pop up shops and supporting promotional campaigns for 'Shop Local' type schemes. There is also a drive to tackle detriments to the streetscene, such as tatty shopfronts, with links to arts projects.

The Head of City Development and Cultural Services set out how the Museums Service could incorporate culture on the high streets, and planned to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver an outreach/community based local history project in an empty shop unit in Paulsgrove. Further links could be made with partner organisations such as the University of Portsmouth to support arts projects in the heart of local communities. The role of libraries to the local centres was also examined and the new timetable for the mobile library which visited the communities, both of which attracted visitors to these locations.

Whilst the Town Centre Management officers' main focus were the 3 main shopping centres, they were also instrumental to helping to encourage initiatives in the tertiary shopping areas with their involvement in events planning and Pubwatch schemes and they have developed good links with the local traders' associations. The traders' associations also contributed significantly to the review, giving examples of good practice in areas such as Castle Road and Albert Road where successful festivals are held on a regular basis, the improvements reported by Cosham Traders and the experience of a trader moving to Highland Road, as well as a newly created Traders Association at Fratton.

**Objective 3 - To review the sustainability of these centres within communities with a diversity of retail, leisure and health uses**

Then panel examined the public transport provision to the shopping areas which had good coverage, and were mindful that the City and County Councils subsidise some of the routes so this would be subject to budgetary provision. The parking provision varied with some areas having some off-street car parks, some having free parking and others having restricted or charged parking to meet the demand.

The diversity of uses and types of retail gives the shopping areas their distinct character, with specialist shops and community facilities acting as a draw. The

Council aims to minimise negative health impacts and promote community involvement within shopping areas, with encouragement given to walking and cycling to local shops. The council is working with the Portsmouth Cycle Forum to improve routes and provide more secure storage of vehicles in the retail areas.

The importance of supporting local enterprise was also key to the sustainability agenda and reducing carbon emissions caused by traffic. Businesses could also be encouraged to work together in environmental schemes.

### **3. Conclusions**

1. The panel recognise the advantages of setting up traders' associations and value the role of Town Centre Management in encouraging these associations and events in the secondary shopping areas, acting as a point of contact and advice for the traders. (refer to paragraphs 6.3.1, Section 6.8, Section 6.9, 6.10.2)
2. The panel welcomed the Head of Environment and Transport's programme of measures to encourage sustainable methods of transport and the associated environmental benefits for the secondary shopping areas. (paragraphs 6.10.6, 7.1, 7.5.1, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8 & 7.9)
3. The panel recognised the importance of increasing footfall, length of stay and loyalty of customers in the secondary shopping areas through national and local initiatives. (paragraphs 5.8.2, 6.3.2-4, 6.3.6-7, 6.5-6.6, 6.10 & 7.3.3)
4. The panel was excited by the prospect of the Head of Development & Cultural Services' move to anchor some cultural venues and events in the tertiary shopping areas to improve the sustainability of the shops and trading as seen in the opportunity for access to museum exhibition materials within Allaway Avenue in Paulsgrove. (paragraph 5.9.4 and Section 6.4)

### **4. Recommendations**

1. The panel strongly encourage the setting up of traders' associations in as many parts of the city as possible. (Conclusion 1)
2. The city council should host two meetings per year, to which traders should be invited to share best practice, preferably in the spring and autumn. (Conclusion 1)
3. The Active Travel Team should approach traders and traders' associations to see how to assist in attracting people to cycle and walk to the secondary shopping areas. (Conclusion 2)
4. Town Centre Management and the appropriate officers should encourage bids for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and lottery monies for improvement works and events to be held in the retail centres. (Conclusion 3)
5. The Head of Development and Cultural Services' officers should continue to explore external funding opportunities such as the Heritage Lottery Fund for

when suitable sites are available for cultural venues within the secondary retail centres. (Conclusion 4)

6. The Head of Development & Cultural Services should explore the possibility of residents being able to purchase and collect tickets for PCC-led events at the PCC venues and facilities in the shopping areas. (Conclusions 3 & 4)

## **5. To understand the different characteristics of the local retail centres and the planning policy, licensing and other restrictions to development (Objective 1)**

### **5.1 Town Centres**

- 5.1.1 Residents depend on our town centres for access to shopping, entertainment, leisure, culture, public services and transportation. Portsmouth town centres are natural locations for trade and commerce and they are very important to the community surrounding it. These town centres are no longer just about the 9 – 5 economy, with the value of the evening and night time economy in terms of jobs, and business creation, also being very important. The evening and night time economy is worth about £450 million to Portsmouth. Developing leisure activities and places to meet within the local community would also have many benefits.

- 5.1.2 **Threats** - In the 1980s and early 1990s there was a decline in most town and city centres due to the competition from out of town developments which led to a “town centres first” planning policy and the development of town centre management initiatives. The current threats are due to the rise in internet shopping and a change in retail patterns. Centres now need to be more than a retail hub. Nationally visits to town centres have declined by over 20% in the last 5 years. The Town Centre Manager reported that in Portsmouth over the past 5 years footfall has declined by 7% in the City Centre and decreased in Southsea by 6%. Therefore centres now need to be much more than shops and must have an affinity with their communities if they are to succeed.

- 5.1.3 The panel would focus on the "tertiary" areas covered by the review and the need to see what is practical for the type of area to see if this would work in other retail areas.

### **5.2 Area of review and Planning Policies**

- 5.2.1 Claire Upton-Brown, the City Development Manager explained the planning context of this review topic, and how PCC tried to protect retail. Within the Portsmouth Plan there were identified shopping centres in this hierarchy:

- The City Centre
- Southsea
- the Districts
- then the retail offers outside of the policy

(NB in the table the planning and parking areas which overlap are in bold)

Planning Area	Parking Area
1) The City Centre (including Gunwharf) and Southsea	
2) District Centres (Albert Road & Elm Grove, Fratton, North End, Cosham)	<b>Elm Grove</b>
3) Local Centres  <b>Allaway Avenue</b> Castle Road <b>Copnor Road (North)</b> <b>Copnor Road (South)</b> Eastney Road <b>Fawcett Road</b> <b>Havant Road</b> , Drayton  <b>Kingston Road</b> Locksway Road <b>London Road (North)</b> <b>London Road (South)</b> Leith Avenue  <b>Portsmouth Road</b>  St James's Road  <b>Tangier Road</b>  Tregaron Avenue <b>Winter Road</b>	<b>Allaway Avenue</b>  <b>Copnor Road (South and North)</b>  <b>Fawcett Road</b> <b>Havant Road (Drayton)</b> Highland Road <b>Kingston Road</b>  <b>London Road (Hilsea)</b>  Milton Road (Eastney Road) New Road <b>Portsmouth Road (Cosham/Highbury Northern Buildings)</b>  Queen Street  <b>Tangier Road</b> The Strand  <b>Winter Road</b>

5.2.2 The Portsmouth Plan sets out the terms for '**local centres**'<sup>1</sup>.

5.2.3 The City Development Manager reported that the areas covered were as listed within the Portsmouth Plan and the question could be raised when considering the next development plan of whether the retail offer is being diluted and the need for impact assessments for further retail provision in the city. Alan Cufley, the Head of Corporate Assets, Business & Standards raised the issue of whether a residential element would increase the sustainability of these smaller retail areas?

<sup>1</sup> The planning policy for these centres is Policy PCS18 'Local Shops and Services' of the Portsmouth Plan <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/pln-portsmouth-plan-post-adoption.pdf>. There is an overview map of all of the local centres on p123.

### **5.3 Challenges to the local centres**

5.3.1 The smaller retail offers provide a useful community service and are used by many as a top-up to major shopping and the danger to these had been highlighted during discussion of the major Tesco application at Milton. The government allows changes of use without the need for planning permission which weakens the local government position on retaining retail units. As seen with the Tesco planning application in Milton there were challenges to the smaller shops with big users coming in and there was already a decreased demand due to the rise of internet sales. There is evidence of decline at Fratton, as seen by the vacant units there.

### **5.4 Deregulation**

5.4.1 The City Development Manager explained that in the last few years central government has introduced in a number of new 'permitted development' measures which have deregulated the planning system. These include allowing offices to convert to residential dwellings without needing planning permission and introducing a 'temporary use' option which allows most types of properties to convert to A1 (shop), A2 (financial services) and A3 (restaurant/cafes) Uses for a period of two years without requiring planning permission.

5.4.2 The LGA has been campaigning against these changes and believes that councils should be provided with powers to set out permitted development rights locally, subject to consultation and a local impact assessment. The LGA has also been pushing for payday lenders and betting shops to be taken out of the A2 (financial services) Use Class Order, and put into their own category, so as to give local councils greater controls over the proliferation of these types of businesses.

### **5.5 Licensing - Restrictions and considerations**

5.5.1 Nickii Humphreys, PCC's Licensing Manager explained that the Licensing Unit have interaction with the Events Team in considering applications, and some events took place within premises so were covered by provisions of the Licensing Act for late night entertainment and drinking hours. She was also responsible for other licences and street consents that contribute to the development of the city, charity collections and street trading permits. There are statutory fees to cover the cost of administering these applications.

5.5.2 There would be legislative changes in 2015 regarding the level of fees with the potential discretion for local authorities' costs to be reviewed, and there is a de-regulation pattern anticipated for regulated entertainment, to allow more flexibility for small scale events not to require application (although these do on council owned land). Any premises with under 200 people can currently have live entertainment up to 11pm and the government's intention is for this to extend from 200 to over 500, which had been out for consultation<sup>2</sup>.

5.5.3 The licensing regime allows for a variety of type of entertainment for different age groups and the encouragement of a mix of uses can be advantageous to a business area. Each application is dealt with on its own merits and the Licensing Committee consider the set licensing objectives.

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<sup>2</sup> The proposed implementation date is 6 April 2015

5.5.4 A concern was raised by the panel of the rise of money brokers and betting shops in retail areas; this is dealt with under the Gambling Act but there are less controls and draft legislation is considering looking at this by planning use rather than licensing use.

5.5.5 For night-time markets licenses could be applied for temporary bars e.g. German markets. The Licensing Manager explained that whilst there were restrictions there is also discretion for temporary events for extended hours and the number of times they can be applied for. The Town Centre Manager felt that it is important to state the nature of the event such as family orientated festivals and if there was a documented policy applications to Licensing could be accompanied by descriptions of what was wanted from events, such as the food festivals. The Licensing Manager explained that in certain cases there is a local remit for street trading. However the licensing regime could not be used to restrict the uses of shops such as where there is a perceived over concentration of certain competing businesses, e.g. hairdressers.

## 5.6 Vacant Units & Business Rates

5.6.1 Ed Woodhouse, the Head of Revenues & Benefits explained that reduced rates on empty properties cannot be made locally as these are subject to legislation and not subject to variation or discretion.

5.6.2 Empty retail premises (shops, restaurants and pubs) in 'shopping areas' as at 11<sup>th</sup> December 2014:

Albert Road	5
City Centre	13
Copnor Road	4
Eastney/Milton	4
Southsea Town (inc Elm Grove)	9
Fratton	7
Havant Road	3
Highland Road	6
Cosham High Street	5
North End (inc Kingston Road)	20

	<u>Retail properties</u>	<u>Total empty</u>	<u>Percentage of empty</u>
<b>1a. The City Centre</b>			
Arundel Street	32	4	12.5%
Charlotte Street	12	1	8.3%
Cascades	55	2	3.6%
Crasswell Street	5	0	0.0%
Commercial Road	106	10	9.4%
Edinburgh Road	14	1	7.1%
Gunwharf Quays	111	2	1.8%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>1b. Southsea</b>			
Clarendon Road	23	2	8.7%
Marmion Road	53	0	0.0%

Osborne Road	55	3	5.5%
Palmerston Road	69	2	2.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
<b>2a. District Centre - Albert Road</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.0%</b>
<b>2b. District Centre - Elm Grove</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>2c. District Centre - Fratton Road</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
<b>2d. District Centre - North End</b>			
Chichester Road	16	0	0.0%
Kingston Crescent	10	0	0.0%
Kingston Road (also shown in 3. below)	105	4	3.8%
London Road (also shown in 3. below)	213	13	6.1%
New Road	22	0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<b>2e. District Centre - Cosham</b>			
High Street	112	6	5.4%
Spur Road	11	0	0.0%
Wayte Street	10	0	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>3. Local Centres</b>			
Allaway Avenue	19	0	0.0%
Castle Road	22	1	4.5%
Copnor Road (North)	87	4	4.6%
Copnor Road (South)			
Eastney Road	37	2	5.4%
Fawcett Road	68	0	0.0%
Havant Road, Drayton	65	3	4.6%
Kingston Road	105	4	3.8%
Locksway Road	18	1	5.6%
London Road (North)	213	13	6.1%
London Road (South)			
Leith Avenue	6	0	0.0%
Portsmouth Road	19	0	0.0%
St James's Road	5	0	0.0%
Tangier Road	35	0	0.0%
Tregaron Avenue	6	0	0.0%
Winter Road	29	0	0.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

- 1) The City Centre (including Gunwharf) and Southsea
- 2) District Centres (Albert Road & Elm Grove, Fratton, North End, Cosham)
- 3) Local Centres (the list of roads above)

5.6.3 'Void' is essentially shops, pubs, restaurants, other retail premises and offices.

- 5.6.4 Empty rates are not payable at all for land, listed buildings or for property with a rateable value of less than £2600. These are classified in broad areas and there is a relatively low number of voids. It is hard to compare this with other local authorities who do not make this information readily available.
- 5.6.5 **Empty property rates** - there is an exemption for the first 3 months before they are payable in full by the owner/landlord (6 months for industrial properties). There is also a 6 week rule whereby if units are occupied for less they are not eligible for exemption to be re-claimed for these shorter periods. Charity and community owned units can be zero rated when empty and also have a 80% reduction on their business rates when they met the necessarily criteria for charitable status.
- 5.6.6 The traders' representatives raised their concern regarding out of town landlords who do not have the same community spirit when considering the impact of these empty units on the local high streets. The Head of Revenues & Benefits reported that there is a rateable charge on a property and the owner and landlord have a lease arrangement; the landlord cannot be forced to charge reduced rates to attract occupiers. He had a team of inspectors who visit to check that units are empty and eligible to be considered as voids.
- 5.7 The **Portas Review** (originally undertaken in 2011) was again topical with national media coverage of Ms Portas' views on the need for government funding to help the local high streets<sup>3</sup>. It was also noted that in Hastings landlords had been told by the Council to redecorate the frontages of retail units to ensure they were not detrimental to the streetscene, and it was felt that where appropriate this should be encouraged as it could spur on other owners to look at the condition of their property and enhance an area. The panel's chair and vice-chair spoke with Penny Mordaunt MP as Minister for High Streets on 23 January 2015 (covered in section 6.10 of the report).
- 5.8 Eyesores Working Party**
- 5.8.1 Bruce Lomax, PCC's Housing Standards Manager, explained that part of his role dealing with residential accommodation in the private rented sector included environmental issues. He is also chair of the Eyesores Working Party (EWP) which uses regulatory enforcement powers and also draws on experts from the non-regulatory areas such as Town Centre Management. The EWP is a cross departmental officer group, which deals with referrals of dilapidated properties on a quarterly basis, looking at the legislation available to seek improvement. Officers try to trace the landlords of non-residential properties to try to work with them to seek solutions. The details of individual properties could not be discussed publicly due to data protection issues, and some may be the subject of legal proceedings.
- 5.8.2 Powers available to the EWP to deal with identified properties included provisions of the Town & Country Planning Act - such a requesting painting of frontages - if resources were available an assessment could be made for the whole street to be done - in the private rented sector there was some funding available for this. Residential properties can be more difficult to deal with and

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<sup>3</sup> BBC news article 16 December 2014 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-30480438>

less proactive action can be taken. Improvements could also be made by use of internal shutters or student art projects on hoardings to make an area more attractive. Ward councillors can make referrals to the group which are then assessed for appropriateness and officers visit and photograph the properties for further discussion on suitable avenues of action.

- 5.8.3 The Building Act and Public Health Act are also used for environmental problems, where there is a shop with a residential unit above the Housing Act can be used to ensure the housing is in a good standard. Notices are also served to remove rubbish. Officers try to work with the owner to come to an agreement and only when this fails enforcement action is taken or a notice can be put on a property for the necessary works to take place in default (with a charge being put on the property). Only a few notices have an appeal process and some will result in court action. Officers discuss the most appropriate action and have been successful in securing some effective solutions such as artwork over dilapidated shop windows.



## 5.9 PCC owned units

- 5.9.1 The panel received a written submission from Jo Bennett, Leasehold & Commercial Services Manager and Tom Southall, Corporate Asset Manager on Vacant Units in the Secondary/Tertiary Retail Centres, regarding units owned by the City Council.
- 5.9.2 Portsmouth City Council manages various parades of retail properties held within the Housing Revenue Account. These are primarily located within Paulsgrove and Leigh Park, with some small clusters in Milton and Buckland areas. Some parades are small (2 properties) others are larger (21 properties), the average size of parade is made up of between 3 and 6 properties. Excluding isolated individual shops there are 52 properties that are within parades.
- 5.9.3 Many of these properties are protected under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, with tenants having protected business tenancies to carry out their

trade. When retail properties become vacant the following criteria is considered before re-letting:

- Has the property been successfully marketed in the past
- What potential uses have expressed interest
- Has the Council received any comments or complaints that need to be addressed
- What is the current mixture of retail offering on the parade
- Who are the target users
- Is there an internal requirement or a need for focused community benefit (drop-in centres)

5.9.4 No consideration is given to tenants looking to open dedicated betting shops or off-licence facilities under new leases as these do not offer any wider community benefits. It was hoped that liaison would take place with the Head of Culture to look at the potential for a suitable unit in Allaway Avenue to be used for exhibition space to increase the opportunities for access in the north of the city (covered further in section 6.4). It was also reported by the Chair that Portsmouth Football Club had expressed an interest in having a presence in Paulsgrove.

## **6. To consider the success of promotional activities, grant opportunities and initiatives in generating and retaining customers (Objective 2)**

### **6.1 Events Management and the event application form**

6.1.1 During the review the traders' representatives had raised their concern regarding the length of the form and at the December meeting David Evans, the Seafront & Events Manager presented a draft copy of the revised application form which was 4 pages long which would be easier for event organisers to complete. His department processed over 200 applications a year (checking the necessary risk assessments and public liability were in place). It could be used for small events and larger ones - for major events an accompanying event safety management plan was needed (relating to consultations with the police, traffic and licensing). The smaller events would need more basic information for the applicants to get the agreement to run their own events e.g. celebration of Christmas Lights in Albert Road and the Daisy Chain events there. If there was a need for a road closure this did however need a 12 week notice period. It was noted that charitable events had a separate licensing requirement. It was still preferable for the Events Team to be given 6 weeks' notice where possible.

6.1.2 The traders' representatives present welcomed the revised form and that there was the ability to block book events for the year. The draft application form was to be consulted on, to be in place by the end of January 2015. This would be made available online. The panel welcomed this simplified approach.

### **6.2 Purple Flag<sup>4</sup>**

6.2.1 Alan Knobel, Alcohol Strategy Co-ordinator, Health, Community Safety and Licensing explained the work that had previously taken place regarding this accreditation scheme which is overseen by the Association of Town Centre Managers. Whilst the City Council had decided not to pursue its application, the framework was useful in consideration of the safe night-time economy (even though this applied mainly to the larger centres). Its principles included:

- Wellbeing: Crime reduction - including CCTV, provision of public toilets, street pastor schemes
- Movement - secure modes of transport and safe pedestrian routes
- Ensuring a broad appeal - arts and culture being extended to the retail centres - away from a focus on alcohol for a mixed customer profile, encouraging mixed age groups etc.
- Place - street furniture, lighting, signage, public art & sculpture
- Policy Envelope - co-ordination of the above, partnership working and political leadership.

The panel members asked what extra steps would be needed for the scheme's implementation; this would require resources such as for a dedicated Purple Flag co-ordinator and elements of the scheme like night-time buses.

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<sup>4</sup> **Purple Flag** is an accreditation scheme that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night

6.2.2 The City Council's **Shopping Festival** in September 2014 and the museums' **Sherlock Holmes Trail** had encouraged people to go further and extend their trips (with points on the trail including Elm Grove).

### 6.3 High Streets Conference

6.3.1 As part of the evidence gathering the Chair of the panel, Councillor Swan, attended the conference 'The Future of UK High Streets: Driving Local Growth and Regeneration' in September 2014 where the opening speaker was Penny Mordaunt MP, as High Streets Minister. Ms Mordaunt referred to the Cosham Traders Association and how they had helped to rejuvenate Cosham High Street through the contribution of Tony Coombes, owner of a key cutting business in Cosham and an active Traders' Association representative.

6.3.2 Delegates were directed to the **Great British High Street** website<sup>5</sup> for their campaign '**Love your local market**', which has helped to rejuvenate many local high streets and provides ideas that have worked in the past to help increase footfall.

6.3.3 There is a **Christmas Market Action Day** campaign to be held nationally on December 6<sup>th</sup>, also accessible from the Great British High Street link.

6.3.4 Ideas raised at the conference 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
- Night time Markets to encourage evening economy

6.3.5 **Problems** that affect shopping areas and reduce footfall:

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

6.3.6 **Ideas for tackling Tatty Shop Fronts**

- (i) **Art projects** - if businesses sign up to this then PCC could potentially look at an art project, perhaps in conjunction with the University/Local Artists to 'paint' shutters so that when shops are closed the area looks good (see article "Culture on the High Street"<sup>6</sup>).
- (ii) There was also reference to a scheme called '**nominate your neighbourhood**' which ran a Street Art Programme via The Londonist (online paper) - the Street Art increased footfall by 75%.

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<sup>5</sup> [www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/arts-culture/promoting-arts-culture/culture-on-the-high-street>

6.3.7 The Future of the UK High Streets conference also highlighted the need for a **'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. 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, which will differ by area.
- (v) **Pop up shops** - The conference referred to the **Pop Up Britain** scheme<sup>7</sup>, which has its own programme manager. It used local colleges to encourage students studying businesses to come up with business ideas and get them out into the local area. This could be combined with business projects as long as sufficient business mentoring takes place.

6.3.8 **The report by the Chair** of the panel, following attendance at the conference also included these further issues:

- **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.
- **Loss of retail units** - Potential to use landlord licensing schemes to prevent shops being converted if the **premises** have flats above them.
- **Moveable museum exhibitions** - this was also covered in the response report by the Head of Culture (in section 6.4)
- **Software for local traders** - to sell their products online for delivery called **Open High Street** - but this scheme **does** depend on local traders actually getting together as people would shop via the various stores and have one delivery from all combined.

## 6.4 Culture on the High Streets in Portsmouth

6.4.1 **Museums** - The panel received a report by Stephen Baily the Head of City Development and Cultural Services, in consultation with Jane Mee, the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://popupbritain.com/>

Museums Service Manager, in response to ideas raised by the Chair, such as for moveable, temporary exhibitions to be housed in empty shops, and to provide additional information on the role of local shopping centres in driving growth and regeneration. The proposal aims to extend the positive role of museums, libraries, archives and arts to animate, revitalise and support Portsmouth's local high streets and shopping areas.

6.4.2 The existing capacity of the Museums Service offers a particular challenge to extending service delivery beyond Museum buildings in terms of staffing, funding, and ensuring care of collections to professional standards. However there is the opportunity to build on a range of successful **community engagement projects** across the city such as *Lest We Forget* (linked to 100 year anniversary of the First World War) and *A Tale of One City* (part of the city's Dickens 2012 celebrations).

6.4.3 **HLF Bid** - The Head of Culture explained his intention to bid for external funding (the Heritage Lottery Fund), when a suitable space was available in the north of the city, to deliver an outreach/community based project which would:

- Attract footfall into under-used shopping areas
- Showcase community identity and pride
- Address the under-representation of some local communities in city collections (e.g. Paulsgrove)
- Can easily partner with any additional locally-based campaigns to support the role of town shopping areas in local economic growth and regeneration, building and supporting the role of local communities in driving forward growth and regeneration.

6.4.4 The Head of Culture proposes to create an **outreach project** based in an empty shop within town shopping areas. The shop would host a wide range of activities utilising local collections that support communities to research and present elements of their own history, as identified by the community itself. This was welcomed by the panel as residents who were not on Portsea Island often felt disenfranchised, and the benefit of satellite offices of the city council could be to access tickets for major PCC events or registering for council services.

6.4.5 **Paulsgrove Project** - Previous projects undertaken by Museums have built strong links with local community groups, including in Copnor, Baffins, Paulsgrove and Cosham, which can be utilised to attract and recruit people into the project. A Paulsgrove-based project focused on collecting stories and photos of Paulsgrove past and present would also address the under-representation of Paulsgrove in city collections, while providing the community with a unique opportunity to explore and present the history of the community. Activities could be based in the empty shop that facilitate this exploration and also train community members to develop and care for a heritage collection and curate an exhibition. The Service could also train and support community volunteers to staff the venue.

6.4.6 Funding for the project would need to be generated through a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid for £75k to cover the costs of delivering and running the

project, including buying in staff to deliver and oversee it. Match-funding from the local authority would be required to support the bid and would comprise free use of the venue (no business rates, no rent, no service charges etc).

## **6.5 Markets**

6.5.1 A recent Cabinet paper on developing Portsmouth's local and specialist street markets highlighted the potential for local markets to contribute to skills development (including developing business skills for young people and marginalised communities) and supporting local start-ups. The campaigns highlighted at the High Streets Conference attended by the Chair of the panel (Great British High Street; Christmas Market Action Day; Pop-Up Shops) have been utilised all over the country and provide a pragmatic research base and best-practice models for carrying such ideas forward locally.

## **6.6 Promotions and Engagement with local communities**

- 6.6.1 Local involvement is vital to progress the ideas raised to identify localised issues and possible solutions and are vital in securing buy-in among local residents, ensure spaces are used and even reduce anti-social behaviour.
- **Shop Local/Use It or Lose It campaigns** can kick-start meaningful engagement with local communities on what is valued locally in the high street.
  - **Street audits** in shopping areas have been used in other areas (e.g. Brighton) to capture how local shopping areas and high streets are being used, which people visit and why, what features are valued by the local community and how local communities are using and moving around high street and shopping spaces. Street audits can also kick-start discussions in local communities about the importance of these spaces to Portsmouth's economic growth and regeneration. They are also useful in assessing different use of shopping areas and high streets by different groups during the day or night.
  - **Empty shops** and unused spaces used as temporary or permanent **community spaces**. The Empty Shops Network has also worked in Portsmouth before and has experience of the local area. A 'mixed-economy' model of partnership working between public, private and voluntary sector works particularly well in these projects, particularly when partners are based in local communities.
  - **Culture on the High Street** – the University of Portsmouth would be an excellent partner for supporting arts projects in the heart of local communities. The Creative & Cultural Industries faculty in particular has a legacy of community engagement and a wealth of experience in this area that would allow them not only to showcase the work of local students, but also support the creation of arts projects directly from local communities themselves.
  - **Makers Emporium** – the ongoing success of makers markets at the Square Tower, Guildhall, and Palmerston Road highlight the potential for this proposal. Private, voluntary and public partnerships offer the strongest opportunity for delivery, bringing together makers in local communities with established creative industries. The role of the local authority in this becomes central in facilitating the development of such projects, for example, identifying sites, promoting and publicising through existing networks (e.g. Flagship).

- An **audit of empty shops** in local communities (or citywide) – audits are carried out most often by local authorities, either as a one-off snapshot or more regularly to provide local councillors and communities with ongoing data on local and independent retail growth or decline. For example, Cherwell Council carried out an empty shop audit in Banbury Town Centre showing 53 empty town centre (ground floor) units in May 2014, which had fallen to 44 when the audit was repeated in September.

## 6.7 Libraries

The panel wanted to consider a wider use of the libraries, including the mobile library in the community and heard from Lindy Elliott the Library & Archive Services Manager.

6.7.1 **Southsea Library** was a successful example of a library/cultural offer moving into a retail centre, and in its first year there had been a 4% increase in footfall identified<sup>8</sup>. The library service had received feedback from parents that they extended shopping visits by rewarding their children with visits to the library for events such as 'Rhyme Time'. Her librarian colleagues nationally had undertaken research that showed that libraries do benefit shopping areas.

6.7.2 The timetable for the newly launched **mobile library service** (from 1 September 2014) running from Monday to Friday is as below:

<u>Day</u>	<u>Morning</u>	<u>Afternoon</u>
Monday	Drayton Lane/Havant Rd	Paulsgrove - Ludlow Rd
Tuesday	individual deliveries	Eastney - Fort Cumb. Rd
Wednesday	London Road	Mayfield Rd/Copnor Rd
Thursday	Farlington (Sainsburys)	Anchorage Park (Morrisons)
Friday	North Harbour (Tesco)	Drayton Lane/Havant Road

6.7.3 The mobile bus provided books and talking books for all age ranges. It would not run over the Christmas period and was not scheduled for the weekends but other stops could be considered, but with extra scheduling there would be staff resource implications. Responsible and fully qualified drivers were needed for events.

6.7.4 The wider library service had been involved in the annual BookFest - this was not privately sponsored but there was a partnership link with the Hayling Island Bookshop. There may be funding opportunities available through publishers' corporate social responsibility funds where educational projects are identified.

6.7.5 **Relocation of libraries** into shopping areas - whilst this had worked at Southsea there would be large resource implications at other venues, and there could be other constraints (e.g. the Carnegie Library incorporated a charity, the Cosham Library had been the subject of proposals to move this to the shopping area but this had not been universally backed).

<sup>8</sup> as reported to Culture, Leisure & Sport portfolio on 10 February 2012

## **6.8 Town Centre Management**

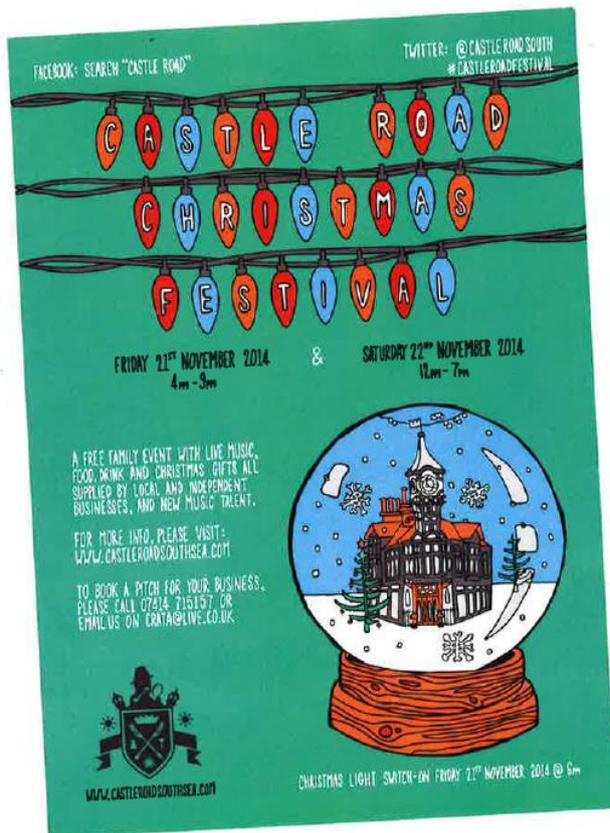
- 6.8.1 Barry Walker, City Centre Manager submitted written reports outlining the role of Town Centre Management. Whilst he did not cover the local centres he did try to help where possible e.g. providing Christmas lights for Castle Road where it was shown that traders were working together. He reported that future events planned included a Small Business Day in December, a shopping Festival in September 2015 and supporting a 'shop local' event to highlight independent traders in July 2015.
- 6.8.2 Town Centre Management (TCM) within Portsmouth City Council, work with businesses, local community and PCC to lead the promotion and management of initiatives designed to maintain, support and enhance the position of Portsmouth City Centre as a sub-regional shopping centre and support the council's wider retail offer through its 3 centre strategy. This role includes:
- co-ordinating the aims of the City Council with the aims of business
  - creating an environment in which business can flourish
  - representing business needs to the City Council
  - co-ordinating the different City Council functions where they impact on Town Centres
  - maximising the benefit and minimise the detriment of Town Centre developments
  - Acting as a conduit and a catalyst
- 6.8.3 Town Centre Management focus on two key issues: how many people come (footfall) and how long they stay (dwell time). The TCM officers are involved in liaison with traders including advice, encouragement and sign-posting regarding premises licences, Temporary Events Notices (dealt with by the Licensing section), events applications (dealt with by the Events team) and put them in touch with other groups who may have had experience of hosting events. Barry Walker, City & Town Centre Manager, outlined work in the different retail areas, whilst his main role was at the City Centre and Southsea, he also linked with traders in other areas (which had a variety of formality of arrangements of business groups) at Cosham, Albert Road, North End, Drayton Paulsgrove, Castle Road and he was becoming involved at Fratton (through Fratton Big Local).
- 6.8.4 Town Centre Management is a partnership between the public and private sectors which brings together a wide-range of key interests to promote the vitality and viability of a town centre and maintain its key role as the heart of its community to help ensure that our town and city centres are desirable and attractive places at all times of the day. The main focus of TCM activity is based on the three primary retail centres of the City Centre, Southsea Town Centre and Gunwharf Quays. However the District Centres of Cosham, North End together with Albert Road and Elm Grove each has a specific role that is particularly important for residents and employees.
- 6.8.5 Town centre management initiatives have also been focused on resolving environmental, security or marketing issues applicable to each centre.

- 6.8.6 TCM have initiated and supported Pubwatch schemes in the City Centre, Southsea and North End and also initiated and support the Portsmouth Business Crime Reduction Partnership. Both of these initiatives will have contributed to the falling crime rates. Environmental Improvement projects have been delivered in Southsea, Albert Road, North End and Cosham, with the City Centre Manager acting as 'the Client' for these schemes.
- 6.8.7 **Specialist markets** - In Southsea the introduction of Hampshire Farmers Market, Love Southsea Market, occasional Continental Markets and the Arts & Collectables market, together with the annual Southsea Food Festival, has created an appealing identity that is supported by the local community.
- 6.8.8 The development of **Christmas Lights** delivered to town and local centres across the city has engaged the communities in their area with switch-on events and celebrations. More recently the '**Shop Local**' campaigns and the introduction of welcome banners engages the community. Similarly, the Independents Day launch has been well supported by the business community and sole traders.

## 6.9 The Traders' Associations

- 6.9.1 As part of the review traders' representatives were invited to attend - whilst the more well established groups gave evidence it was also noted that other groups were developing elsewhere such as at Fratton and Tangier Road was holding a Christmas fayre. Some of their comments (especially for Albert Road, Cosham and Castle Road) related to improvements to roads, traffic flow and problems caused by lorries, which were referred to the relevant officers. Whilst pedestrianisation was favoured by some traders in the city it did not have the support of others (as had been evident at Palmerston Road).
- 6.9.2 Examples of good practice in traders organising events for their areas included the **Castle Road Festival** where the traders contributed £10 each per month and businesses were asked to pay for a pitch and the **Daisy Chain** events in **Albert Road**.





## CASE STUDY 1

Tobi Stidolph had also been instrumental in organising the **Castle Road** festivals such as the Easter event in Castle Road which attracted people through food and simple entertainment. It was recognised that setting up a traders association was relatively easy but its success would be reliant upon its members to make an effort and believe in it. The council could support initiatives by removing barriers to events - so that procedures were stream-lined such as for road closures. However when the organiser had suggested widening the area of the Castle Road events up to the Clock Tower this had been rejected on traffic management issues (disabled parking provision) and environmental health had voiced concerns regarding the noise with the event running until 9pm.

6.9.3 An event that had become a victim of its own success and had become unmanageable had been the '**Love Albert Road Day**' (last held in 2009), where the rubbish and anti-social behaviour had upset local residents and the main beneficiaries had been the drinking vendors rather than local traders. It has also been costly for policing. This had however help spark other successful and well managed events in the city such as 'Victorious'. Jenni Catlow was pleased that smaller events were taking place in Albert Road, which she was involved in, such as Daisy Chain (the Daisy Chain Festival in June 2014 was a combination of creative and family-orientated events at venues along the road).

6.9.4 The atmosphere of events is important and the Southsea food markets had been popular. Tony Broome of **Cosham TA** had reported that Monday was a successful day for their shops due to the local market being held that day. Whilst it was hard to accurately calculate the increase in footfall caused as a result of these events the intention was to create the feeling of a place to spend more time in and have a range of expertise retained in these areas. He also highlighted the importance of parking availability - free parking for 1 hour in Cosham, where implemented, had been welcomed by the traders who would wish this to be extended along the High Street, which would need accompanying enforcement to ensure it is effective. The Cosham traders had also welcomed the recent maintenance enhancements in the area, but would still welcome further work to the pavements.

#### CASE STUDY 2 - Strong Island

Paul Gonella outlined the problems that this business had found in finding a new venue over a 12-18 month period. He had found they were always too late when a suitable property was identified they had already gone to someone else. He explained that the considerations and the areas they had looked at in the Southsea area as Winter Road and Marmion Road had high rents and they had found an opening at Highland Road where they had opened premises on 15 November. Part of the attraction there was that there were other interesting businesses. They had linked in with the jeweller opposite that would have some studio space available and there was café space at the cycle shop. They hoped they would attract other businesses into the area as had happened in Osborne Road. Strong Island also had the picture framers next to them that the local artists use and so they ensure that their exhibition space was used in a way that people were also aware of the framers.

Part of the choice of moving to Highland Road was that they wished to stay in Southsea as they knew from their customers that 80% were based there and so people would now be able to walk to pick up orders. There were also two parking spaces at the front with one hour waiting that people could use and he was hoping that they could attract more cyclists if there was more cycle provision which was being discussed with the city council.

6.9.5 Members welcomed the opening of this new exciting business in Highland Road which was hoped would help revitalise this area which did have vacant units.

#### CASE STUDY 3 - Fratton Traders - an example of a new Traders' Association

Nick Courtney as the chair of the new Fratton Traders' Association, which had started in 2014, explained how this had come about with the involvement of Fratton Big Local with only one person attending the first meeting, four attending the second where he was made the chair and by the third meeting in January there were 20 traders. He had gone from shop to shop to invite others as it was hard to get traders to attend evening meetings and had ensured that five councillors had attended. The big concern in the Fratton area for the traders was the anti-social behaviour with security worries by traders with burglaries to their shops and as such it was important to get

the police involved in the meetings and they would be attending the fourth meeting of the association on 16 March. The format for the meetings was as a forum with a question and answer session and this one would also be opened up to the public who used the shops. Other issues that were being raised were parking, cracked pavements, the need to promote the image of Fratton Road and to start planning events there. Nick felt that the selection of shops suffered from a lot of duplication which caused problems for other businesses with a lot of takeaways, hairdressers and barbers (a view that was echoed by Jenni Catlow regarding Albert Road).

There was a need to raise the public perception of the area. Social media was also being used to get comments and he felt there was a need to promote the interesting range of shops such as the model shop and an aquarium was now opening that people didn't know about. Traders felt that the road had been severely affected by the impact of a large Asda, with the loss of butchers and greengrocers and they now had their own optician and chemist within the Bridge Centre, so the business would have to be very different to get an opening within the centre such as the new Cuban Beach Café. Another problem was that customers were using the parking at the back of Asda but then didn't go through to the main road.

Fratton Big Local was helping with the admin work and they were also receiving support from the city council. He hoped that in the future there could be a road closure on a Sunday for a food market in the area.

## **6.10 Penny Mordaunt MP for Portsmouth North and High Streets Minister**

6.10.1 The Minister spoke with Councillor Julie Swan (Chair EDCL) and Councillor Matthew Winnington (Vice-Chair EDCL), whose evidence include the success of the Shop Local promotional schemes. She referred to The Great British High Street portal, which has a wide range of material and shows where schemes have worked well (e.g. Belper, Derbyshire) where there is a clear brand identified. She stressed that it is fundamental to have a clear vision for the area, and a unique selling point, otherwise there is the risk that the scheme will fail. There is assistance available to councils from the minister's department which has produced toolkits to support traders' associations, and this was requested for Portsmouth CC.

6.10.2 The importance of involving traders and creating traders associations, such as the emerging Fratton Road Traders was discussed and Ms Mordaunt's work in North End where she has carried out a survey of their traders, asking what their businesses need as well as writing to over 20 national brands with premises in North End asking for them to commit a resource at a local level (Corporate Social Responsibility). She would be sharing the results of the survey and had already been asked about parking experiments being needed to encourage customers.

6.10.3 The EDCL panel was giving consideration to encouraging traders days/forums, and the minister felt that the traders would need to see swift results from giving up their time. There should be incentives with progress being evident - such as tidying up an area, reusing a vacant shop etc. People would then be more receptive to giving their time on this voluntary basis and they would also benefit from it, with an increase in footfall.

6.10.4 Regarding involvement of national retailers becoming involved in local schemes she referred to Deal in Kent, where the Sainsbury's store was a catalyst to other things happening, such as some of their car park being used for a market. It is not just enough to do a 'Shop Local' scheme - North End already has the stickers for this - there needs to be a larger plan, and there parking has been identified as a problem by the traders.

6.10.5 There is also scope for traders to let some of their retail space be used for those who run street stalls or usually sell on-line. Events should promote interesting independent traders too. Further work is taking place on digital support and reducing costs - such as free WiFi.

6.10.6 The Great British High Street portal also has examples of public transport being encouraged and where there are bike-in schemes (some with linked rewards). It is important to have safe cycle routes for this to be promoted. Although some businesses by their nature (with bulkier or computer products) will need car access.

## **7. To review the sustainability of these centres within communities with a diversity of retail, leisure and health uses (Objective 3)**

The panel looked at the sustainability of the local shopping areas within their communities and the links to public transport and environmental issues, as well as considering the mixed uses of the centres.

### **7.1 Public Transport**

7.1.1 Danny Johnson, the Passenger Transport Officer produced large maps for the panel showing the routes available to the secondary shopping areas. He explained that the city council does not run the bus services - this is a commercial venture run by both First and Stagecoach operators in the city. The operators cover 86% of the service with the city council purchasing 14% where they do not provide cover and where there is an identified social need e.g. the Highbury Estate. He stressed there had been massive investment by both companies in the city with the provision of good services and shelters in the city. The real time information at bus stops would be rolled out by March 2015.

7.1.2 The Passenger Transport Officer outlined the **frequency of services**:

- for the shopping areas with the buses numbers 12, 18 and 20 ran half hourly services but most of the services were at 10 minute intervals such as to Highbury and at Locksway the number 13 was a half hourly service.
- Despite speculation it was confirmed that the service at Paulsgrove was not ceasing. The number 18 was a half hourly service up to Hillsley Road which had subject to change with the loss of early morning services but this did not affect the shops as this was before the opening times and there were additional buses on this route. Allaway Avenue had two services of 10 minute frequency each.
- There was some variation such as the number 19 to Ocean Park was only a two hourly frequency and most customers travelled there by car.
- Havant Road, Drayton had an aging population served by No. 23 Stagecoach which had a 10 minute frequency (and this had been rerouted to help access to QA Hospital).

### **7.1.3 Funding and Subsidised Routes**

Most of the small parades of shops in the city did have reasonably services to them but the bus service provision was dependent on the city council's budget round (and also in some cases to the Hampshire County Council's budget provision). However there is a bidding opportunity for the contracts. The Passenger Transport Officer explained the subsidised services:

- Numbers 1, 3, 7 and 8 are supported after 9.00 pm to the Portsmouth boundary.
- Number 12 is entirely city council supported to allow connectivity to Highbury.

- The 13 and 14 has a late night journey subsidised in the evening by PCC.
- The 15 and 16 is entirely PCC funded.
- The 17 and 18 is subsidised by PCC after 8.00 pm.
- The number 19 is a two hourly service entirely PCC funded
- Number 21 after 7.00 pm to 10.00 pm all day Saturday and all day Sunday (with a Hampshire CC contribution for their part of the route).
- Number 23 is PCC subsidised after 7.00 pm Monday to Sunday and some early morning Sunday provision.

7.1.4 The city council also subsidised the park and ride to the main centres. The gross cost to the city council is £440,000 pa (as at October 2014) but Hampshire County Council make a contribution for the numbers 21 and 23 and there is an element of Department for Transport (DFT) grant provision.

## 7.2 Parking

7.2.1 There was the issue of parking charges and bus services with the right routes to get people to the local centres.

7.2.2 Michael Robinson, the Parking Operations Manager explained the parking provision for the secondary shopping centres. In Fratton, North End and Cosham shoppers needed to pay for parking whereas in the local shopping areas of Milton, Allaway Avenue and Drayton the parking was not paid for but instead there was use of limited waits to ensure there was parking available for customers whilst still encouraging a turnover.

7.2.3 **Charges** - At **Fratton** the charge is 90p per hour. It was noted that the Mary Portas review had looked at the correlation between parking charges and demand but it was noted that Gunwharf was very successful but had the most expensive parking in the city.

7.2.4 The Parking Operations Manager felt that whilst half hour and one hour limited waiting works at **Elm Grove** it is more expensive for the parking service to manage, whereas pay and display areas are most effective with the necessary revenue for managing the provision and to ensure a turnover of vehicles. At Elm Grove there it had been decided that one hour free had been the best compromise (to suit the mix of businesses) before extra parking is charged for. The challenge at **Albert Road** was that there was no off-street parking in the vicinity whereas at **Marmion Road** this was alleviated by the Waitrose car park.

7.2.5 The **Cosham** traders had not wanted charges introduced but when they were implemented they experienced reduced commuter parking outside the retail units, which had been welcomed. There, customers could press for ticket for one hour's free parking so this did not impact on the parking officers.

## 7.3 Mix of uses

7.3.1 The panel had considered the need to encourage people back into the areas through the provision of community facilities such as libraries and mobile libraries which attract customers (see section 6.4)

7.3.2 There has been success in filling units such as Milton shops where it was thriving as there was a good range of shops, a post office and a renowned butcher, whereas in Drayton and Farlington the post office had closed which had been a focal point and had made the more elderly population want to go out to the local shops, and there had been an expansion in the number of estate agents rather than retail uses. The difference between the thriving Albert Road and the neighbouring Highland Road which had lots of empty units it was noticeable.

7.3.3 The panel felt there was a lack of a PCC information points throughout the city; these would be useful for buying tickets of big events (e.g. as Festival of the Sea) rather than people having to come into the centre of the city.

#### **7.4 Response of the Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development (PRED)**

7.4.1 Councillor Luke Stubbs addressed the panel as a relevant portfolio holder, making the following points:

- The secondary shopping areas were not in as much decline as in other cities. Whilst he was disappointed that McDonalds had withdrawn from North End, he felt their reason was the need to have a car park which was within their own business model.
- With the current squeezes on council budgets it was unlikely that traders would be able to benefit from lower business rates. He did not feel there was a simple solution, the main way forward being their self-help by traders acting together in associations.
- It was important to have the right shopping mix and magnet stores to increase footfall. Some areas relied on their demographics with Albert Road benefitting from student shopping.
- He was aware of the need to change the planning policy as shops could be converted into flats and shops to cafés without the need for planning permission.
- Some smaller supermarkets such as Tesco Express could consolidate local centres and increase footfall.
- The Local Plan stated that where there was a demonstrable shortage another shop could open.

#### **7.5 Health & Health Impact Assessments**

7.5.1 Alan Knobel, representing the City Council's Public Health department reported that the aims to minimise negative health impacts included:

- to minimise crime and maximise employment opportunities
- promote healthy food options and availability of fresh fruit and vegetables
- encourage walking and cycling - linking to the sustainability agenda
- Reduction of smoking and alcohol misuse
- promotion of healthy living pharmacies<sup>9</sup> within shopping areas

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<sup>9</sup> A 'living pharmacy' is a nationally recognised concept enabling pharmacies to help reduce health inequalities within the local community, by delivering high quality health and well-being services, promoting health and providing proactive health advice.

- consider impact on equality groups and community concerns

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## **7.6 Sustainability and Carbon Reduction**

- 7.6.1 Jo Cole, the Carbon Reduction Co-ordinator reported on the council's involvement in environmental issues and the sustainability agenda. Other modes of transport should be considered to encourage walkers and cyclists for the local use of retail centres, with the provision of safe places to secure bikes. It was important to promote sustainable events and promote local produce such as the high quality produce of Bransbury Butchers and the Farmers' Market in Southsea which was a major attraction.
- 7.6.2 Retail units were major users of energy and there were recycling and waste issues for the shopping centres. Use of materials for carrier bags and takeaway containers were also of concern. It was important to encourage businesses to share in environmental schemes such as rubbish and recycling and pooling of resources although this was usually done on a larger scale to be beneficial. She would provide local traders more information regarding low voltage goods particularly as there is some funding available for small businesses for energy efficiency.
- 7.6.3 **Carbon emission** concerns were based on the high number of cars and therefore there was a need to change behaviour and make the local centres more pleasant experiences to encourage the use of local shops on a regular basis and reduce car journeys. To improve air quality there needed to be more encouragement of drivers to stop idling engines when waiting outside shops for their passengers to return. An idea raised at the High Streets conference (see 6.3.12) was the pooling together of businesses using online ordering via local collection points.

## **7.7 Cycling**

- 7.7.1 The panel noted that whilst cyclists were provided for well in the city's main retail areas, there would be less provision in the tertiary areas. D locks could not be used on the thick lampposts and the crime rates could be off-putting in the smaller areas for those wishing to leave their bikes securely. The City Development Manager reported that when looking at new provision in planning terms cycle lanes and including the use of car park spaces for cycle storage could be considered.

## **7.8 The Portsmouth Cycle Forum (PCF)**

- 7.8.1 Jon Spencer, Chair, reported that Portsmouth Cycle Forum over 3-6 months had developed their cycling strategy "A City to Share" which outlined the benefits of cycling to the health and economy of Portsmouth residents. He noted that the secondary shopping areas were all on A or B classified roads which had 30 mph limits. These roads function not only as shopping streets but also as residential streets and major through routes. These different modes of use are not complementary. PCF believe that much more consideration needs to be given to the public realm in high streets to make them places people choose to spend time rather than visiting one shop and then leaving again as soon as possible.

7.8.2 The PCF members find it hard to locate safe routes across the city especially when giving consideration to children. The main through route from Fratton to Hilsea experienced the highest levels of cycle accidents. The city's high driver numbers had a knock-on effect on air quality levels making it unpleasant to spend time on busy shopping streets. Mr Spencer asked that there be consideration to what the areas were to become and to encourage people to spend time in the shopping areas. PCF feel there is a need for a change of attitude for major changes to take place such as in the Netherlands where the cycle lanes had been incorporated within the infrastructure and trade stayed within the big cities.

## **7.9 PCC's Active Travel Unit**

7.9.1 James Roberts, Active Travel Officer from Transport & Environment, PCC responded to some of the points raised by the Portsmouth Cycle Forum:

- Road Closures - these could take place and the Transport & Environment Department would look at requests for these but there would be a cost involved.
- Cycle Casualties - these are known to be high for London Road and in response to this the department were using Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) monies for improvements for the cyclists there and at Powerscourt Road.
- General Cycle Infrastructural - that there would be some new storage facilities in Highland Road with LSTF funding being used within the district centres to improve storage for cyclists which would meet DDA standards.
- With regard to the suggestion of making major road such as London Road one-way with cycle lanes he reported that there would be more cycle infrastructure to be put in their but for a major change to the one way there was a need to consult residents and this could be a costly scheme.
- cycling and parking enforcement - red lines are not used in Portsmouth but enforcement officers were looking at problems when reported such as the parking on yellow lines at Elm Grove and Albert Road. They would be working with the police to do targeted enforcement of parking on the cycle lanes in Spring 2015 and persistent offences should be reported to the Transport & Environment department.
- To use some parking spaces for storage of bikes this would need a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and support from local residents who usually wish to protect parking spaces. There is also a need for cycle storage to be in accessible and visible areas to increase security (904 bikes were reported stolen each year in Portsmouth).

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment**

An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Act 2010.

## **9 Legal Comments**

There are no legal implications identified at this stage.

## **10 Finance Comments**

- 10.1 The majority of the recommendations contained within the report should be deliverable within existing cash limits.
- 10.2 This may be with the exception of the recommendation with regard to the Road Safety and Active Travel team. There will be a resource impact if the team is to spend additional time meeting with traders and trader's associations. The team is small and therefore unless additional resource and required funding is secure, the work of the team would need to be re prioritised.
- 10.3 Additionally the capital costs of any signage or other cycle or pedestrian solutions will need to be met from either the LTP programme, or additional funding will need to be identified.
- 10.4 It should also be noted that any bid for CIL funding, either the Neighbourhood element of the Corporate Resource element would need to be in accordance with the Council's previously published CIL policy.

## 11. BUDGET AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table highlights the budget and policy implications being presented by the panel's recommendations.

Recommendations	Action by	Policy Framework	Resource implications
1. The panel strongly encourage the setting up of traders' associations in as many parts of the city as possible.	Head of Corp Assets, Business & Standards/ TCM	Within Budget & Policy Framework (BPF)	Ongoing - TCM acts as a point of contact to advise businesses how to set up TAs
2. The city council should host two meetings per year, to which traders should be invited to share best practice, preferably in the spring and autumn.	Head of Corp Assets, Business & Standards/ TCM	Not currently within BPF	This would need to be funded - venue hire and administrative charges
3. The Active Travel Team should approach traders and traders' associations to see how to assist in attracting people to cycle and walk to the secondary shopping areas.	Head of Transport & Environment/ Active Travel Team	Within LTP3 and associated capital programme, and possible public health budgets	Dependent on availability of corporate resources and look for other supplementary funding such as LSTF to support initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to these retail areas
4. Town Centre Management and the appropriate officers should encourage use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and bids for funding and lottery monies for improvement works and events to be held in the retail centres.	TCM & Head of City Devt & Cultural Services	BPF (CIL is dependent upon developments)	Officers can offer advice to businesses on external funding opportunities to businesses

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action by</b>	<b>Policy Framework</b>	<b>Resource implications</b>
5. The Head of Development and Cultural Services' officers should continue to explore external funding opportunities such as the Heritage Lottery Fund for when suitable sites are available for cultural venues within the secondary retail centres.	Head of City Devt & Cultural Services	External Funding being sourced	On-going consideration by officers for suitable opportunity; reports would be brought to members regarding implications
6. The Head of Development & Cultural Services should explore the possibility of residents being able to purchase and collect tickets for PCC-led events at the PCC venues and facilities in the shopping areas.	Head of City Devt & Cultural Services	No resource implications identified at this stage	On-going discussions within existing resources.

## 12. APPENDICES

<b>APPENDIX A</b>
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### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL**

#### **SCOPING DOCUMENT**

**Proposed title:**

**REVITALISING LOCAL HIGH STREETS AND SECONDARY SHOPPING AREAS  
IN THE CITY**

#### **1. Background**

The panel intend this review to look at the capacity of the different local retail centres within the city to attract and retain customers.  
(The major retail centres will not form part of this review.)

#### **2. Objectives of the Inquiry**

- To understand the different characteristics of the local retail centres and the planning policy, licensing and other restrictions to development
- To consider the success of promotional activities, grant opportunities and initiatives in generating and retaining customers
- To review the sustainability of these centres within communities with a diversity of retail, leisure and health uses

#### **3. Written or verbal evidence to be heard from witnesses from the following:**

- Planning & Transport - to include carbon reduction and accessibility issues
- Health & Community Safety - to include the night-time economy
- Regeneration - those promoting the retail centres' activities

(Further witnesses are listed in Section 5)

#### **4. Possible issues and questions to be addressed**

- Planning implications and how vacant units are dealt with in the retail centres.
- Consideration of the role of the evening and late night economy in revitalising local centres; providing activities for a wide range of people which are not purely focused on young people and alcohol driven.
- Integration of health improvement services (such as Healthy Living Pharmacies) and leisure facilities (such as the mobile library service)

- How to increase footfall, dwelling time and loyalty in the local retail areas to ensure there is better use by the local catchment.

## **5. Methodology and work plan**

### **Written and documentary evidence**

It is also proposed that the panel seeks briefing information from council officers and documentary evidence from a number of organisations to inform the review.

### **Witness statements**

The panel may seek evidence from witnesses at formal meetings.

### **Possible Witnesses to include:**

Hampshire Chamber of Commerce

The Small Business Association

Portsmouth Business Crime Reduction Partnership

Association of Town Centre Management

Association of Market Towns

The police and community wardens

Market traders and local shopkeepers

Penny Mordaunt MP, High Streets Minister

### **Site visit opportunities:**

- Chair to attend the DCLG conference in London on 18 September 'The Future of UK High Streets: Driving Local Growth and Regeneration'
- Community days
- Visit an example of a successful local market elsewhere

## **6. Background documents**

The following documents have been circulated to members of the panel:

- High Street Performance and Evolution (University of Southampton, July 2104)

## Membership and Meetings of the EDCL Panel 2014-15

At the start of 2014/15 municipal year the Economic Development, Culture & Leisure Scrutiny Panel (EDCL) membership was set as:

Councillors Julie Swan (Chair), Matthew Winnington (Vice-Chair), Simon Boshier, Ben Dowling, Hannah Hockaday and Lee Hunt.

The panel met formally on 6 occasions between 11 September 2014 - 18 March 2015.

DATE	WITNESSES	DOCUMENTS RECEIVED
11 September 2014	Claire Upton-Brown, City Development Manager	Agreed Scoping Document
22 October 2014	Barry Walker (City Centre Manager) & Alan Cufley (Head of Corporate Assets, Business and Standards) Danny Johnson, Passenger Transport Officer Michael Robinson, Parking Operations Manager Jo Cole, Carbon Reduction Co-ordinator	Written comments from Tony Broome of Cosham Traders Association
12 November 2014	Traders' Associations Reps: Tobi Stidolph & John Pryde (Castle Road) Jenni Catlow (Albert Road) Lindy Elliott, Library & Archive Services Manager	Stephen Baily's paper - culture on the high street Town Centre Management reports by Alan Cufley Chair's report on High Streets Conference
16 December 2014	PCC Officers: i) Ed Woodhouse, Head of Revenues & Benefits ii) Nickii Humphreys, Licensing Manager iii) Alan Knobel iv) Bruce Lomax	

DATE	WITNESSES	DOCUMENTS RECEIVED
3 February 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Nick Courtney, Fratton Road Traders</li> <li>ii) Paul Gonnella, Strong Island</li> <li>iii) Jon Spencer, Portsmouth Cycle Forum</li> <li>iv) James Roberts, PCC Active Travel Officer</li> <li>v) Cllr Luke Stubbs, Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development</li> <li>vi) Stephen Baily, PCC Head of City Development and Cultural Services</li> </ul>	<p>More info on Void Properties - Ed Woodhouse, Head of Revenues and Benefits</p> <p>Planning Deregulation information from City Development Manager</p> <p>Feedback from Telephone conference between Penny Mordaunt MP and the Chair and Vice-chair of EDCL panel</p>
18 March 2015	Sign-off meeting	

## Glossary

<b>APPENDIX C</b>
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BPF	Budget & Policy Framework
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DFT	Department for Transport
EWP	Eyesores Working Party - internal to PCC
HCC	Hampshire County Council
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
LTP	Local Transport Plan (funding for schemes)
PCC	Portsmouth City Council
TA	Traders' Association
TCM	Town Centre Management