

ITEM NO: 8 Appendix 1

District Centres Inquiry – Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsible Officer	Target Date for Completion	Action Taken / Comments
<p>To improve the co-ordination and management of Southampton’s town and district centres it is recommended that:</p> <p>1) Using Portsmouth’s model, appoint a District Centres Co-ordinator to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Act as a link between Southampton City Council, traders and other commercial and community interests in town and district centres b. Work with traders to establish traders associations within each town and district centre c. Help establish a programme of events within town and district centres with traders associations and Active Communities d. Act as the lead officer for district centres within the Council, acting as the conduit for a joined-up, planned approach to the future development and improvement of town and district centres e. Explore potential external funding to support initiatives to improve town and district centre management. 			
<p>To improve understanding of Southampton’s town and district centres, and to actively promote growth and manage change, it is recommended that:</p> <p>2) The City Council, using Planning Policy Statement 6 as a guide, collates and analyses on a regular basis, relevant performance measurement information on the health of the town and district centres. This may include existing data on cleansing, crime, vacancy rates as well as information available from the Chamber</p>			

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<p>of Commerce on business confidence.</p> <p>3) Through the Sites and Policies Plan process, and monitoring / implementation of the existing adopted Local Plan, the City Council's increases its understanding of the vitality and viability of the town and district centres, and that this information is used to assist in managing change in town and district centres where needed, and when consistent with planning powers.</p>			
<p>To improve the accessibility of Southampton's town and district centres it is recommended that:</p> <p>4) The clarity of the car park signage is improved to ensure that shoppers are aware of the 5hr free parking available within the City Council's town and district centre car parks.</p> <p>5) To enhance access to the district centres, develop a sense of identity, and improve the attractiveness of district centres, extend the Legible Cities programme to the town and district centres and devise an approach to prioritise resources.</p>			
<p>To enhance the vitality and viability of Portswood District Centre it is recommended that:</p> <p>6) The impact that the new development on the bus depot site has on the economic well-being, traffic levels and congestion within Portswood District Centre is monitored.</p> <p>7) The potential to reduce the length of the taxi rank to enable more on-street car parking within the District Centre is investigated.</p>			

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<p>To enhance the vitality and viability of Bitterne District Centre it is recommended that:</p> <p>8) Southampton City Council invests in the public realm to improve the appearance of Bitterne District Centre.</p> <p>9) Through the Sites and Policies Plan process, the existing adopted local plan, and the determination of planning applications, the City Council facilitates proposals which come forward for the provision of an additional food store within Bitterne District Centre to promote greater competition.</p>			
<p>To enhance the vitality and viability of Woolston District Centre it is recommended that:</p> <p>10) The time limit for on-street parking is raised from 30 minutes to a minimum of 1 hour.</p> <p>11) Signage within the District Centre is improved to raise awareness of available car parking provision within the District Centre.</p> <p>12) The Cabinet Member for Economic Development makes representation to the Government about the Business Rate Valuation levels being charged within Woolston District Centre.</p> <p>13) If the initiative utilising the Future Jobs Programme to improve the externals of vacant business premises in Woolston District Centre is successful, this approach be applied across all of Southampton's town and district centres.</p> <p>14) Building upon work undertaken by Swaythling Housing Society, a vision for Woolston District Centre is developed, in conjunction with traders and local community groups that identifies how Woolston District Centre can be revitalised, and funding is sought to deliver the vision.</p>			

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<p>To enhance the vitality and viability of Lordshill District Centre it is recommended that:</p> <p>15) The consultants appointed to undertake the Lordshill Masterplan take into account the best practice in planning for district centres (eg as identified by the Association of Town Centre Management and others), and best practice employed within New Town developments when developing the Lordshill Masterplan.</p> <p>16) The consultants appointed to undertake the Lordshill Masterplan consult residents fully throughout the Masterplanning process, and utilise Sainsbury's expertise in helping to promote successful centres.</p>			
<p>The District Centres Inquiry report was considered by OSMC on 18th February 2010 and agreed that the following recommendations should be included:</p> <p>17) That the possibilities of splitting vacant shop premises within the district centres into a number of smaller retail units or work areas be investigated.</p> <p>18) That an annual review of the health and potential of the district centres be undertaken and the results be presented to the OSMC as part of the State of the City report from the Leader.</p> <p>19) That the Cabinet Member for Economic Development request that officers investigate an appropriate mechanism or forum for traders across the City to exchange ideas and best practice.</p>			