

Sustainable Development Select Committee			
Title	High Streets Review: Scoping Paper	Item No	5
Contributors	Scrutiny Manager		
Class	Part 1	Date	20 January 2015

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 At its meeting on 9 September 2014, the Committee decided as part of its work programme to undertake an in-depth review into High Streets.
- 1.2 This paper sets out the rationale for the review, provides some background information on the current situation within Lewisham and sets out proposed terms of reference for discussion and agreement by the Committee.
- 1.3 The in-depth review process is outlined at Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

The Select Committee is asked to:

- note the content of the report
- consider and agree the proposed terms of reference for the review, outlined in section 7 and the timetable, outlined in section 8.
- consider whether it wants to look at the larger high street/town centre developments such as Catford and Lewisham, medium sized high streets such as Blackheath or Forest Hill, or smaller high streets such as at Honor Oak or Brockley – or a combination of the three.

3. Policy context

National Context

- 3.1 Defining exactly what is meant by ‘town centres and high streets’ can be difficult. However, the British Retail Consortium’s report called ‘21st Century High Streets: A New Vision For Our Town Centres’ defined Town Centres as having the following:

- A retailing centre that serves the needs of the local community;
- Leisure, entertainment and cultural facilities
- Public and private sector services
- An employment and business sector
- Accessibility by a choice of transport
- The perception of the local community as their town centre

In respect of High Streets, it defined them as the following:

- Destination/regional/national city centre
- Local town centre
- Neighbourhood
- Market towns
- Historic/cultural destinations

3.2 The present Government has stated that high streets and town centres are facing serious challenges from out-of-town shopping centres and the growth of online and mobile retailing. High streets need to be social places with a vibrant evening economy and to offer something that neither shopping centres nor the internet can match. In May 2011, The Government appointed Mary Portas to lead an independent review into the future of the high street. 'The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets' was published in December 2011.

3.3 The Portas Review identified the need to put the heart back into the centre of high streets, re-imagined as destinations for socialising, culture, health, well-being, creativity and learning as well as places that will develop and sustain new and existing markets and businesses. High Streets should become places where people go to engage with other people in our communities, where shopping is just one part of a rich mix of activities. A key precursor to the Portas Review was the New Economics Foundation's major campaign entitled 'Clone Town Britain', which tracked the increasing dominance of chain stores in the town centre retail mix and ranked high streets according to the uniqueness of their retail offer. The Portas Review suggested a wide range of measures to help the high street, including funding 24 Portas Pilots and 330 town teams with support from dedicated local experts, to help the Portas Pilots and town teams adapt their high streets to changing consumer behaviour.

3.4 The Government also announced a package of measures after the December 2013 Autumn Statement to support UK high streets, consisting of:

- A new consultation to tackle aggressive parking policies, which harm high streets
- A review of double yellow lines, legislating to allow "grace periods"
- Stopping CCTV being used for enforcement
- Cap increases in parking penalty charges for the rest of this Parliament, with immediate effect

3.5 The Autumn Statement in December 2013 also presented a package of business rates support to help the high street, support for business-led digital town centres and the Government, in partnership with business, would fund £4.7 million of research on e-commerce and digital high streets innovations. There were also proposals to change planning regulations, so that changes to permitted development rights will offer town centres the flexibility they need to adapt existing buildings. The Government stated that they would consult on permitting change of use from retail to restaurants and retail to cinemas, gyms, skating rinks and swimming pools. They will also consult on allowing

installation of mezzanine floors in retail premises where this would support the town centre.

3.6 The Government has also created a 'Future High Streets Forum' that advises Government on the challenges facing high streets and helps to develop practical policies to enable town centres to adapt and change. The Forum's main functions are:

- Helping to accelerate the programme of local mentoring established in response to the Portas Review
- Advising the Government how better use could be made of existing buildings, to bring people back to live in town centres, increasing footfall and supporting shops
- Supporting the expansion of initiatives such as 'Love Your Local Markets' and pop-up shops across the country
- Researching a practical toolkit to help town teams 'futureproof' their high streets
- Exploring solutions to barriers like local parking policy

3.7 The Government also created an initiative to help high streets via a British BIDs-run £500,000 loan fund scheme, to help communities who wish to create a 'business improvement district' overcome prohibitive initial start-up costs. There is also the 'Love Your Local Market' initiative, and a competition was launched in June 2014 to find the nation's best high streets, run by the Future High Streets Forum and the Association of Town and City Management.

Local Context

3.8. The Lewisham's Sustainable Communities Strategy 2008-2020' in the section, 'Improve the quality and vitality of Lewisham's town centres and localities' sets out the following in respect of High Streets and Town Centres:

- Lewisham Gateway has ambitious plans for the future of Lewisham town centre, including replacing the roundabout with a new road layout, opening a new park and attracting a major department store to the area
- Catford town centre will undergo substantial regeneration. This will include transforming the former greyhound stadium into a new housing development and small shops. Catford and Catford Bridge stations will be linked by a new plaza and a new pedestrian bridge over the railway will provide better connections with the town centre
- The Giffin Street development will see the extension of Giffin Square as well as new library and learning facilities and a new home for Tidemill Primary School

The Council will also:

- Support the growth and development of our town centres by working with commercial partners and developers
- Encourage a mix of businesses that reflect the diversity of the borough and its citizens and ensure that our town and local centres are fully accessible for all our communities

- Maximise the use of our town centres as places to engage the local community
- Strengthen Lewisham's economy by continuing to support and encourage the cultural and creative sectors

3.9 The Lewisham Regeneration Strategy also sets out the high level approach to encouraging and supporting local businesses, including high streets. The Implementation Plan 2011-2014 Monitoring Report received by the Sustainable Development Select Committee on 12 March 2014, highlighted a number of achievements in improvements to high streets, such as:

- Highway and footway improvements in Ladywell Village including road narrowing and creating parking for shoppers
- Works to Sydenham high street during 2012 and early 2013 to create a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and shoppers, without adversely affecting the flow of traffic

4. Sustainable Development Select Committee Scrutiny

4.1 The Sustainable Development Select Committee has conducted a number of Reviews, and scrutinised a number of reports in this area over the past few years:

- A Street Trading Review that was published in March 2010, which included recommendations such as looking at controlled parking zones in Deptford near the market, creating a programme of maintenance to improve the streetscape in Deptford, improving the signage and street furniture of the markets, making the markets safer and investigate the feasibility of introducing recycling in the markets
- A report examining local shops and parades in May 2011, which outlined the Council's approach to supporting local shops and parades as well as the powers that local Councils do and don't have in shaping shops
- A review of Business Development in 2013, with the final report sent to the Mayor in July 2013 and a response in October 2013. In the review the Committee recommended that the Council and its partners should continue to be responsive to requests from the community to support with developing neighbourhoods and local high streets as well as other recommendations around working with developers and partners to create incubation space for new businesses and to identify, explore and develop, new 'business clusters' in the borough. In the response it is noted that the Council has adopted the Lewisham Core Strategy which sets out policy at a strategic level for Lewisham and Catford Town Centres, District Centres and other local centre and small shopping parades in the borough

- The Lewisham Business Growth Strategy 2013-2023 was received in December 2013 and was approved by Mayor & Cabinet in January 2014. The Business Growth Strategy has three aims:
 - To boost Lewisham's contribution to the London economy by enhancing the ability of new and existing businesses to thrive and grow
 - To accelerate the expansion of the Lewisham economy by capitalising on major physical regeneration in the borough to create the right environment for business growth
 - To diversify and expand the Lewisham economy by inspiring, nurturing and promoting the creativity and entrepreneurship of Lewisham residents

4.2 The strategy identifies that Lewisham is revitalising and transforming a number of its key town centres. The Council is attracting developer interest and investment which will upgrade the borough's major town centres (Lewisham, Catford and Deptford), strengthen and diversify the retail offer, develop the leisure economy, the night time economy and other non-retail uses. The strategy also identifies that the influx of new more affluent populations into the borough is creating new consumer demands to which town centre businesses can respond. The success of the Strategy will be measured in terms of Lewisham's ability to attract a more diverse range of businesses, increase inward investment, increase the survivability of local businesses and maximise job creation potential.

5. Mary Portas Review Pilot – SEE3

5.1 With respect to the Mary Portas Review, a group of volunteers worked together across Sydenham, Forest Hill and Kirkdale, bid for and won one of 27 Portas Pilot grants in the second round of bidding on 25 July 2012,. The pilot, known as SEE3, had a vision of a high-street where established independent traders are an integral part of the community, new traders bring innovation and further quality, boundaries between retail, culture and community blur, energy of active citizens is harnessed, new ideas are championed and space that is secured for start-up enterprises to develop is readily accessible. SEE3 had five key objectives, which were:

- To test a coherent approach to High Street development in an area of urban sprawl where one neighbourhood merges into another.
- To increase the sustainability of the High Street through layering uses.
- To build on the existing blending of retail and community use to enhance the High Street as a Hub Street and cultural destination.
- To create a fit, agile High Street that can successfully adapt to changing needs.

- To harness and build on our strong active citizenship to enhance the High Street

5.2 The SEE3 pilot was comprised of three key projects:

- Jack and Jill, where two high street shops (one in Sydenham, the other in Forest Hill) were renovated for creative community engagement via exhibitions, showcasing local products, business workshops, pop up events and use as a Town Team base
- The Shop Revolution, which introduced landlords and leaseholders to the concept of 'meanwhile' use – short term leases which keep the unit in use between tenants
- Market Makers, which built on the success of the Girton Road car boot sale and the Forest Hill Food Fair to pilot offerings in Sydenham, Forest Hill and Kirkdale with the aim of finding long term tenants for vacant units. By giving traders the opportunity to test market demand for their offering, they are able to refine their business plan before committing to a long term lease

5.3 In addition to these main projects, the pilot also sought to improve signage, encourage people to shop locally and provide support to get more businesses online.

6. Meeting the criteria for a review

6.1 A review into High Streets meets the criteria for carrying out a scrutiny review, because:

- it is a strategic and significant issue
- it affects a number of people living in Lewisham
- scrutiny can add value in this area
- there has been significant work in terms of the regeneration of Catford and Lewisham Town Centres; the Select Committee recently saw the Lewisham Regeneration Strategy Implementation Plan; and there has been a Mary Portas Review Pilot (SEE3) in the borough

7. Terms of reference/Key lines of Inquiry

7.1 The Select Committee, as discussed in the Mini-Scope of 9 September 2014, would need to define what it understands as 'High Street', and focus on the key areas it wishes to look at.

7.2 The Select Committee would need to consider whether it wants to look at the larger high street/town centre developments such as Catford and Lewisham, medium sized high streets such as Blackheath or Forest Hill, or smaller high streets such as at Honor Oak or Brockley – or a combination of the three.

7.3 Key Lines of Inquiry:

- What are the local development management policies in respect of high streets and how are these being implemented?
- Is the role of the Council in supporting local high streets clearly defined, and is it being communicated effectively to local businesses?
- What are the Council and key partners doing to support and improve the high streets in the borough – and how are businesses, traders and local residents involved in the development of high streets?
- How is the public realm being shaped to promote high streets and better access to high streets for the public?
- What role does planning play in the development of high streets in the borough and could more be done in light of the government's proposals on the 'change of use' of buildings?
- What is being done to promote the diversity of provision on the high streets?
- Are markets and local high streets being supported to operate in a way that is mutually beneficial?
- Are the Council and other partners effectively taking on board lesson from the SEE3 Portas Pilot in Sydenham, Forest Hill and Kirkdale?

8. Timetable

The Committee is asked to consider the outline timetable for the review as set out below. The subject of high streets is broad, so once the Committee is sure of the areas it would like to focus on, it may want to invite other expert witnesses.

First evidence-taking session (3 March 2015):

- Officers from Resources and Regeneration Directorate to help the Committee scrutinise the broad aspects of policy in respect of high streets in the borough.
- Officers from the Planning Team to help the Committee understand the planning issues in respect of the development of high streets.

Second evidence-taking session (First meeting of 2015-16)

- Hear evidence from a representative from the SEE3 Portas Pilot.
- Hear evidence from local business/traders involved in the Portas Pilot.
- Additional traders/local business from other high streets in the borough.

Recommendations and final report (Second meeting of 2015-16)

- The Committee will consider a final report presenting all the evidence taken and agree recommendations for submission to Mayor & Cabinet.

9. Further implications

At this stage there are no specific financial, legal, environmental or equalities implications to consider. However, each will be addressed as part of the review.

Background Papers

The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our high streets
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6292/2081646.pdf

Shaping our future; Lewisham's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020
<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/aboutthecouncil/strategies/Documents/Sustainable%20Community%20Strategy%202008-2020.pdf>

Lewisham Regeneration Strategy 2008-2020
<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/regeneration/Documents/PeopleProsperityPlaceFINAL.pdf>

Supporting High Streets and Town Centres Background Note, 6 December 2013
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263915/Supporting_High_Streets_and_Town_Centres_Background_Note_FINAL.pdf

Future High Streets Forum
<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/future-high-streets-forum>

British Retail Consortium; 21st Century High Streets: A new vision for our town centres - July 2009
<http://www.brc.org.uk/Downloads/21st%20Century%20High%20Streets.pdf>

Love Your Local Market
<http://www.nabma.com/your-local-market/>

Great British high streets worth celebrating - June 2014
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/great-british-high-streets-worth-celebrating>

Street trading review - Sustainable Development Select Committee, March 2010
<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/overview-scrutiny/Documents/StreetTradingReview.pdf>

Implementation of the regeneration strategy – Report to Sustainable Development Select Committee, 12 March 2014
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MID=2935>

Matters raised by Sustainable Development Select Committee: Business Development Review – Report to Mayor & Cabinet, 10 July 2013
<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s23599/Appendix%20A%20-%20SDSC%20Business%20development%20review.pdf>

Local shops and parades – Report to Sustainable Development Select Committee, 10 May 2011

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=136&MId=1973&Ver=4>

For further information please contact Roger Raymond, Scrutiny Manager on 020-8314-9766.

How to carry out an in-depth review

