

APPENDIX B

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH ITEM 9

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES ENTERPRISE AND
BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT ON 'REGENERATION IN
TOWN CENTRES' – JANUARY 2012**

**OF THE REPORT OF THE
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES**

National Assembly for Wales Enterprise and Business Committee Regeneration of Town Centres January 2012

The Committee's Recommendations

The Committee's recommendations to the Welsh Government are listed below in the order that they appear in this Report. Please refer to the relevant pages of the report to see the supporting evidence and conclusions.

Recommendation 1. We recommend that as part of its revision of national planning policy on economic issues, the Welsh Government should ensure that Planning Policy Wales fully protects town centres from the potential impacts of out-of-town retail developments, and that the Government should also take steps to improve the implementation of national and local planning policy on the ground.

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Welsh Government should guide local authorities towards making better use of their contractual agreements with out-of-town retailers to further protect the vitality of town centres. (Page 15)

Recommendation 3. We believe that examples of good practice in promoting town centres should be disseminated more widely, and recommend that the Centre for Regeneration Excellence in Wales should develop its role in this area, including educating and encouraging professionals in the sector. (Page 15)

Recommendation 4. We recommend that the Welsh Government should commission more research on the effects that supermarkets can have on the quality of town centres in order to better inform and improve the impact analysis of proposed developments within the planning control system, and that local retail impact assessments should be obligatory for all supermarket proposals. (Page 17)

Recommendation 5. We recommend that local planning authorities should be encouraged, within their Local Development Plan, to see office and work-place development as a means of increasing footfall within town centres, and that they should assess the possible outcomes of, and alternatives to, out-of-town office development proposals more carefully. (Page 18)

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Welsh Government should establish dedicated Ministerial leadership for town centres, including setting up a town centre policy forum chaired by the lead Minister, that would bring together officials from different Departments and key

representatives from the private, public and voluntary sectors to share good practice and to identify a plan of action and monitoring framework for regenerating Wales' town centres. (Page 21)

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Welsh Government should ensure that the development of integrated and sustainable transport in Welsh town and city centres is a priority in the delivery of the National Transport Plan. Further, the Welsh Government should provide clear guidance to local authorities to ensure that transport integration is a core element of all town centre regeneration and redevelopment plans. (Page 24)

Recommendation 8. We recommend that the Welsh Government should establish a rigorous performance monitoring framework and commission a detailed, independent evaluation of the Sustainable Travel Centre scheme. This should include assessment of the impact of each scheme on the vitality of the town centres involved, including access for people with disabilities. (Page 28)

Recommendation 9. We believe that town centre businesses may need to operate more flexible working hours in order to meet changing customer needs. We therefore recommend that the Welsh Government should update its Technical Advice Note on Planning and Retailing to include guidance for local authorities about imposing conditions on retail development regarding more flexible working hours. (Page 29)

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Welsh Government should work with local authorities to develop planned and innovative approaches that incentivise property owners to let their vacant town centre properties for living and working uses that would contribute to the vitality of town centres but would not undermine the properties' long-term value. (Page 30)

Recommendation 11. We recommend that Cadw should continue with its characterisation studies of towns and villages and that they form an integral part of any regeneration scheme. We also recommend that the Welsh Government should make greater use of the Design Review Service and encourage its development partners to do the same. (Page 33)

Recommendation 12. We recommend that the Welsh Government should review national planning policy and guidance for retailing and town centres to ensure that local planning authorities set out a positive vision for all their town centres and high streets in their Local Development Plan, and to provide a strong planning application decision-making framework for ensuring appropriate development can be guided to suitable locations that are highly accessible by sustainable transport. (Page 35)

Recommendation 13. We recommend that within the framework of the Local Development Plan, each town should have a comprehensive plan in place, developed by a local partnership of key stakeholders and engaging the community, which contains actions for addressing the issues affecting the viability of the town centre. (Page 37)

Recommendation 14. We believe that the key to success in town centre regeneration at a local level is strong, effective leadership. We therefore recommend that the Welsh Government should consider how better to support people who have the necessary skills and the respect of the local community to act as champions for bringing together the different aspects and players in town centre regeneration. (Page 38)

Recommendation 15. We recommend that the Welsh Government should help local authorities and communities to be proactive in seeking and accessing sources of investment for town centre regeneration projects where public funding is unavailable. (Page 40)

Recommendation 16. We recommend that the Welsh Government's independent panel on business rates should consider changes in legislation and in the application of discretionary powers, with the aim of improving the mix and quality of the retail offer in town centres. (Page 43)

Recommendation 17. We recommend that the Welsh Government should consider developing a pilot scheme, within EU competition rules and in partnership with local authorities and property owners, which helps new businesses set up in town centres. (Page 44)

Recommendation 18. We recommend that during negotiations over draft legislative proposals for EU Structural Funds 2014-2010, the Welsh Government should seek to ensure that the new Regulations are sufficiently flexible to enable the Funds to be used to support town centre regeneration activities in the next round. (Page 45)

Recommendation 19. We recommend that the Welsh Government should commission a full and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of the Swansea Business Improvement District and consult with a broad range of stakeholders to inform further BID development in Wales. (Page 47)

Recommendation 20. We recommend that the Welsh Government through Visit Wales should encourage town partnerships to market their unique selling points such as architectural heritage and environmental quality, local produce and local culture, perhaps involving groups of towns within a region so that their different offers can complement each other. This could be part of the town centre plan we recommended above. (Page 49)

Recommendation 21. We believe that the Welsh Government should develop a robust framework for the design, development and delivery of town centre regeneration projects in which objectives and targets can be clearly set; data collected; where outcomes and impacts can be measured; and performance and success evaluated and compared.
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